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Greenwich, October 19th, 1779.

MY DEAR LORD!

**I** Frankly admit that a printed Answer to a private Letter is a mode of correspondence at least unusual, and such as in its first impressions cannot fail of giving you an uneasy sensation.—But I shall not offer any apology;—for the times are unhappily such, as to justify much greater eccentricities of conduct wherever the intention is good.

Your Lordship's letter from Castle Howard found me at Tunbridge Wells, where I had been some weeks endeavouring to divert less pleasant recollections; by wandering about a neighbourhood, which, at different periods of our history, has been the scene of chivalry and romance, of Love and the Muses, of royal dissipation and festivity. Your reflections recalled me to times, in which romance and poetry and mirth are no more. They led me to look very seriously into the situation of our country, and



to endeavour to form a just estimate of the public difficulties and resources. Having described in short but comprehensive terms, the clouds which darken our political horizon in every point of the compass, you express your doubts, whether you may not see matters blacker than they really are, under the circumstances of having lived some time in retirement, and with little more intelligence than is to be collected from printed newspapers.

With respect to the want of all official information, I am at least on a par with your Lordship: unemployed in any active line of public business, I am in possession only of such materials as are accessible to every man in kingdom, who has leisure and inclination to make use of them. But your Lordship will permit me to express a doubt, whether, even so circumstanced, we are not the more likely to see the general prospects in a just point of view.

On my return to this place, I covered my table with books of maps and gazettes of former wars; with lists of fleets and armies; with printed accounts of the public debt and interests; with abstracts of annual services and of ways and means; with Excise compares and Custom-house returns: in short, with all that *farrago* of dead letter and arithmetic which is the best specific against the wanderings of the imagination.

imagination. In plain words, I have tried earnestly, with the help of such imperfect instruments as are within my reach, to see things as they are; for it is certain that all our hopes and fears respecting the public interests and the public safety, are idle, and in some degree mischievous, unless we have previously used our best diligence to appreciate the real circumstances of the nation, as far as they are respectively open to us. This is however one of those barren truths which seldom generate any effect: it is within the reach of every man's observation, but lies dormant and unproductive; as it would possibly have continued to do also in my mind, if your Lordship's letter had not awakened my attention to it.

Seeing now, from this enquiry, or believing that I see much solid ground for hope, and none for despondency, I trust I shall find some satisfaction in stating the reasons of my faith. It has been already intimated, that those reasons are drawn from materials accessible to all the world; they may perhaps receive some colouring from a friendly intercourse with men of all opinions and persuasions; as well as from a disposition to think better of mankind in general, and especially of our contemporaries, than has of late years been fashionable.

In the course of this task, which I have undertaken, it has been my intention to avow unreferredly, and without restraint, such general ideas as occur in the result; and this I shall now do, not seeking the reputation of ability, for I know myself, and the folly of such a pursuit too well; but because it is my earnest wish to ~~then~~ and to promote a disposition towards candour and moderation, which I conceive to be the most important of all public virtues in the present moment.

“ That great empires are never overthrown  
 “ by fortune, and that the causes of public  
 “ ruin, though often accelerated by external  
 “ injury and violence, always exist, in the first  
 “ instance, within the society itself, and may  
 “ be traced in its history,” is a position on which we have occasionally conversed with little difference of opinion. The train of ideas to which the recollection of that point will lead your Lordship, is particularly favourable to my present object; for it will not only explain some difficulties placed in the way of that just estimate, which we wish to form, of the state of the public distresses, but will tend to give us a clearer insight into the main springs and sources of them. It will also appear, that, though the general principles of political action and judgment are the same among all mankind, there  
 are

are some classes of character either peculiar to our countrymen, or which at least do not prevail to a similar degree in any other nation under Heaven.

It is impossible not to admire that benevolence, which, with a disposition to promote the general interests and happiness of mankind, applies its first and best exertions to the benefit of that particular society, that has the nearest claim to them. But the undistinguishing benignity, which professes to think with equal affection, and to talk with equal philanthropy of all the world, and of every individual, is deservedly considered either as a vicious affectation, or extreme weakness, or both.

On the other hand, the opposite turn of character, though perhaps the vice of more active and stronger minds, is not less fatal to true judgment: This is a disposition to assume a tone of malignity, with certain pretensions to firewdness; to speak ill of every public man, and of every public measure; and with an unbridled zeal of invective to overstep all bounds of moderation and candour.

There is a third principle of self-deceit, which is less weak and more genuine than the first that I have mentioned, as well as infinitely more amiable, though not less mischievous than the second: Your Lordship will perhaps be aware, that

that I mean that personal predilection, that attachment to social connections, which is natural, and perfectly virtuous, when kept within just bounds; but the gentle dominion of the social qualities over the breasts of men, which in private life forms one of the finest effects in the whole view of nature, is apt, when applied to political action, to degenerate into an unrelenting tyranny. It is rarely found that considerable bodies of men, who have acted long together in public, can be said to be either ingenuous or candid. I do not recollect that either epithet has ever been applied in history to any party; a party-man is sure to be approved by his own set for whatever promotes the common object of the day. Overbearing clamour, contempt of antagonists, and a pertinacious adherence to arguments, a thousand times repeated, and a thousand times refuted, form the brilliant accomplishments, the solid proofs of merit; and that delicacy of just sentiment, which is the pleasantest characteristic of individuals, is soon lost amidst the applauses of combined friends.

There is a fourth vice in political discussion, which, whether founded in some constitutional pusillanimity, or in an acquired moroseness, or in a desire to shew ingenuity and foresight superior to that of the rest of mankind, produces  
a singular

a singular effect. The men alluded to here, wrest every observation to prove, that their own country is, and in the natural course of things ought to be, ruined :—They undervalue her resources, and exaggerate those of her rivals ; they are so well persuaded that the virtuous struggles of their countrymen are vain and fruitless, that they learn by degrees to consider them as weak, and even wicked ; the optics of these men are so strangely formed, that they see every thing in a distorted and frightful shape ; the joyless regions of their imaginations are filled with “ antres vast and “ deserts idle ;” they produce nothing but “ gorgons, hydras, and chimeras dire ;” a decrease of population, a decline of commerce, a failure of naval force, a relaxation of national vigour, the loss of our chief resources, and the impending hand of an angry Providence. They talk for ever *omine inauspicato* ; they learn also to derive a satisfaction and little triumph from every event that seems to confirm their doctrines ; and if, in the various course of events, any one of the calamities which they have announced, should take place, they are from that moment like the Paris astrologer, who having failed for fourteen years in an annual prediction of the death of Henry IV. pronounced

nounced himself infallible, because his fifteenth prophecy was verified.

The reverse of this set of men are our optimists in political faith—men who are determined to believe that every possible event is creditable to the Government, and beneficial to the State, under which they live. Having heard that the produce of commodities is in proportion to the consumption, they can believe that population is best promoted by wars and emigrations: they can persuade themselves that a public debt is a public benefit; that it is an actual accession of so much property to the kingdom, and a fund of circulation for the support of commerce and agriculture; that every new tax creates a new ability in the subject to bear it, and that every increase of national burdens increases proportionably the industry of the people. They believe in the infallibility of a system, without regard to circumstances; wherever that system is concerned, they think perseverance and success are synonymous terms; and, in short, can convince themselves that the possible loss of many flourishing provinces is amply compensated by the conquest of a little pestilential island.

These gentlemen, being “blest with a set phrase,” courtly in their manner, plausible in their

their doctrines, and discoursing generally according to the wishes and interests of the circle in which they live, gain many profelytes to themselves, and do much mischief to the cause of truth.

*There is another class of men who possess a sort of state-empiricism, and carry about with them a specific for every possible disorder that the body politic can labour under.—They have all the confidence of undertaking projectors, and all the apathy of old practitioners.—They have an exclusive faith in their own panacea, and are so intent in administering it, that they never think of diagnostics, nor ask any questions about the condition and circumstances of the patient.*

I put totally out of the question a seventh set of men, who enlist with and desert from all or any of these irregular corps of reasoners, as may best suit the interests or object of the day; who are not desirous to believe what they enforce, but adopt the several languages of general benevolence, indiscriminate censure, social honour, foreboding despondency, ill-founded confidence, and political quackery, all in the same breath; and can, from habit, enforce sophistry and falsehood with more vehemence and ability, than they could display in the investigation and support of truth.



Least of all, would I wish to mention that heterogeneous class, who can profess and apparently feel a joy in any calamity of their country, because it may affect the situation of some individual whom they dislike; who are sullen, therefore, and silent amidst the tidings of a victory, triumphant and noisy upon the news of a defeat. The instances of this kind are not uncommon. They are, however, a sort of state monsters, which providentially have the curse of all *lufus naturæ*, and happily for the world do not propagate their species.

It should seem, that all these lines of aberration from true judgment are sufficiently distinct and obvious; and that every man might avoid them who wishes in political life neither to deceive himself nor to mislead others; yet your Lordship will find, through all the busiest and most enlightened periods of our history, that nine-tenths of the thinking part of the nation have generally addicted themselves to one or other of the sects which I have described.

Surely, then it becomes every man who has made, or admits the truth of, this remark, to consider how far his own reasonings are free and unprejudiced; and accordingly the first operation of the mind, towards framing a just decision upon the actual situation of public affairs, should be, to divest itself, if possible, of all weaknesses

Weaknesses derived from past habits of intercourse, and from the popular altercations of the day. Perhaps it would be no little help towards this end, to take any subject of present controversy, and to examine how it is treated by its respective abettors. We should next ask ourselves, whether much, if not the whole, of their adverse positions ought not to be rejected from all farther regard, as the language of idle spleen; unbecoming passion, or interested falsehood, and as a mere result of that licentiousness which will at all times more or less degrade the generous character of this country, and is, perhaps, the greatest misfortune that belongs to us as a people.

Let us for a moment suppose the possible case of an English gentleman, arriving in London, after thirty years residence in the inland parts of China, totally ignorant of the present state of his country, but anxious to inform himself: now, if among other matters he should wish to attain a competent notion of the Ministers for the time being, and of their opponents; and if he should happen (which is also possible) to have two near relations or friends of different sides in the subject of his enquiry, he would be assured by the first, with much heat and declamation,

“ That the affairs of the King and Country  
 “ are loosely, negligently, and treacherously  
 “ managed ; that the Ministers are an igno-  
 “ rant, mercenary, and absurd cabal ; rash in  
 “ resolving, but slow in executing ; variable  
 “ in their principles, but uniform in their  
 “ follies ; unfeeling to all shame, but incurring  
 “ daily disgraces ; without skill to recover a  
 “ misfortune, and without presence of mind to  
 “ make any use of an advantage ; giddy with  
 “ success, and helpless in calamity ; wise after  
 “ danger, and distracted in it ; that they have  
 “ brought us into great wars, but have neg-  
 “ lected all preparations at home and all alli-  
 “ ances abroad ; that the empire, under their  
 “ management, is like an unwieldy gigantic  
 “ body, which, being engaged with an active  
 “ combatant, receives twenty wounds, before  
 “ it can return one.—That irresolution, bar-  
 “ renness of invention, want of enterprise, con-  
 “ tinual delay, defensive councils, and long  
 “ protracted action, are the characteristics of  
 “ their war-system.—That though the resources  
 “ of the country are exhausted by their slovenly  
 “ profusion of her treasure, they assert that  
 “ their œconomy is perfect, and that the pub-  
 “ lic purse feels no decay.—That though the  
 “ body politic has all the signs of death upon  
 “ it, they yet say all is well, and continue as  
 “ arrogant

“ arrogant and assuming, as if they had saved  
 “ the very people whom their folly has in a  
 “ manner ruined.—That they are growing rich  
 “ whilst their country becomes poor; are, as  
 “ careless of the public honour as of their own;  
 “ and, in short, that such a Ministry is a surer  
 “ engine to destroy the State, than any that its  
 “ enemies can bring against it.”

On the other hand, it would be stated with  
 more gentleness of expression, but with an  
 equal disregard of all candour;—

“ That there is in this kingdom a party  
 “ composed of individuals of all descriptions;  
 “ that many of them possess high family pre-  
 “ tensions, great personal virtues, and very  
 “ extensive abilities; that, however, they are  
 “ a motley congregation of the divisions, sub-  
 “ divisions, rents and remnants of former par-  
 “ ties, brought together by the various calls  
 “ of good and bad ambition, by the fretfulness  
 “ of reasonable and unreasonable pursuits, in  
 “ some instances by the unaccountable turns  
 “ of natural temper, or by the supposed im-  
 “ portance of having their names on such a  
 “ muster-roll:—That the leading men of this  
 “ party hate each other, as well from old re-  
 “ collection as from recent intercourse; that  
 “ they are irreconcilable to each other in all  
 “ their principles of government, and differ in

“ all their pursuits, past; present, and to come :  
 “ —That in the long concoction and fermenta-  
 “ tion of so strange a mass, all the public zeal  
 “ and public virtue have sunk to the bottom, and  
 “ qualities of a light and more malignant spirit  
 “ have gained the ascendant :—That whatever  
 “ might have been the original object of this  
 “ party, it has long had the effects of a com-  
 “ bination formed against all good govern-  
 “ ment:—That the nation, indeed, has at times  
 “ looked towards it, in the hope of having  
 “ weighty Senators and respectable Statesmen ;  
 “ but that she hitherto has found in them all  
 “ the littlenesses of mere adventurers in poli-  
 “ tics, and of men whose sole drift is to gratify  
 “ personal animosities and private interests :—  
 “ That they exhibit a childish intemperance of  
 “ over-joy on any accidental appearance of  
 “ acquiring strength and numbers, and a ma-  
 “ lignant rage on every symptom of a contrary  
 “ kind ; and that in each of these extremes,  
 “ they appear equally without feeling for the  
 “ public safety, or the national honour : that  
 “ they grasp violently at power which they  
 “ know not how to hold, and are ready to sub-  
 “ vert that state which they are not allowed to  
 “ govern :—That sometimes equivocal in their  
 “ expressions, but ever clear in their designs,  
 “ they misrepresent our situation, undervalue  
 “ our

“ our advantages, and magnify our difficulties : that they rejoice in the embarrassments of government, and boast of having contributed to them ; that in the frenzy of debate they can support rebellion by justifying its principles, and call for foreign war by declaring that we are unable to resist it : that building all their hopes on the bad fortune or bad conduct of the state, they endeavour to increase the distresses which they themselves first occasioned, by exposing our weak parts, by forcing into public discussion our preparations, designs, expeditions, and strength, and thus render themselves, in effect, the most active spies and intelligencers that our enemies can have. And finally, that in the continued display of a conduct so undignified in respect to themselves, so degrading to the honour of their country, and so mischievous in all its consequences, they have, indeed, succeeded in forcing their country to the very brink of destruction, but have lost all pretensions to the confidence of a brave, generous, and animated people.”

The stranger to whom these frothy declamations are addressed, if he had any turn to observation in his younger days, would reply, “ This, my friends ! is an old story of forty  
 “ years

“ years ago; the same things, in the same  
 “ language, were constantly asserted and re-  
 “ torted between the opposite parties of that  
 “ time, and they occasionally made an impres-  
 “ sion on that species of hearers who listen only  
 “ to one side: But they were ever considered,  
 “ by all men of cool reflection and candour,  
 “ as so much illiberal and unbecoming imper-  
 “ tinence, which proved nothing but the in-  
 “ terested zeal, or scurrilous vehemence, of the  
 “ petty retainers of each party. It is, indeed,  
 “ possible that there may at all times exist in-  
 “ dividuals of some note and importance in a  
 “ state, who are wretched enough to disregard  
 “ the safety and increase of any interest but  
 “ their own, and weak enough to sacrifice  
 “ the most sacred objects of their country  
 “ to their own passions; but that associations  
 “ consisting of the first men in a great empire  
 “ should come under so silly and so fordid a  
 “ predicament, is too gross to impose even on  
 “ the common sense of a Samojeide; and  
 “ though it has been the vulgar complaint  
 “ in all ages and places, it is not the more cre-  
 “ dible on that account. But give me your  
 “ proofs; give me facts and circumstances  
 “ tell me what has happened, and how it has  
 “ happened!” Here would open a new and  
 ample field for the combat of misrepresenta-  
 tions,

tions, and the stranger would, in the result, find it necessary to look for very different channels of intelligence.

The truth is, and I am glad to let your Lordship understand, that in this instance I am a mere plagiarist; the charges above stated are by no means of my manufacturing; they are selected with little trouble, and nearly *verbatim*, from the controversies of 1695, between the Whig Ministry of William III. and the Tory Opposition of that time. The same expressions crossed over into different lines of service, and the Tory Ministry and the Whig Opposition the four last years of Queen Anne. They were again in vogue under Sir Robert Walpole, and furnished the printing-presses with daily employment, and daily tautology, for the space of nineteen years. Similar, or much harsher, things were said of the Minister on the one hand, and his opponents on the other, during the administration immediately preceding the present. And the very same invectives will be applied, in the same manner, fourscore years hence. If any administration has escaped them, we may safely pronounce, that it has either been still-born, or has perished in its infancy.

It is an old remark, that the seeds of party and of faction thrive most in the richest soils.



They exist, indeed, but are unproductive, in despotic governments; in a constitution like ours, they must and will prevail. Men have a natural propensity to divide in opinion, and wherever the government of a country is such as to put no restraint upon the avowal of sentiment, every transaction, and every measure of public note and importance, has its respective censurers and admirers. The individuals of each side unite into parties for mutual support; and, whatever may be the predominant motive with each individual, whether interest, passion, principle, or social affection, the progression is almost invariably the same. The over-active zeal of friends gradually raises the like spirit in antagonists; reason ceases to be the counterpoise of passion; resentments and antipathies take place; and the uncandid virulence of habitual dissension forms itself into a system. Thus it happens, that when the original cause or pretence of difference has ceased to be material, or even when that difference is totally exhausted or forgotten, the distinction survives, and is even maintained with new warmth and obstinacy. Nor will there be less co-operation and concert in all party measures, though it should be evident and notorious that few of the leaders agree in the same maxims of conduct, or even though the principles of a

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great

great proportion of the whole may have become more reconcileable to the system of their antagonists, than to that of their own friends. The party once formed becomes the receptacle for all the ill-humours of a state, the point of union for disappointed expectations, frustrated ambition, desperate circumstances, avowed and secret resentments. Faction opens her arms to every accession of malignancy; and the system being thus established, the business of that system goes forward of course, and with as little reflection as any other daily occupation. Every disputable subject is the occasion of mutual invectives, which neither flow from the heart of those who use them, nor reach the feelings of those against whom they are directed. "It is  
 "unlucky that the adversary has advanced  
 "what is right and fit; we must oppose it as  
 "well as we can; we must not permit him to  
 "carry any point unmolested." Again, "We  
 "must confess, among ourselves, that what  
 "we have advanced is mistaken and mischie-  
 "vous; but we must support it; we must ne-  
 "ver confess that we are baffled." Such is  
 ever the language, or at least the conduct, of  
 party; and thus it is, that opposite parties will  
 sacrifice, in their turns, the cause of truth and  
 of the public.

Nor is this contradiction between sentiment and conduct, which in personal transactions would be deemed disingenuous and uncreditable, by any means a proof that the individuals of the party do not possess all the large and generous sentiments which do honour to human nature. Party conformity is a perversion of mind, insensibly acquired and formed into a habit, and in some degree sanctified by history; every man can whisper a plausible apology for it to himself and to others, either by alleging some peculiar consideration in his own case, to which he can give a flattering epithet, or by intimating, that the circumstances of the times make it necessary to act implicitly with friends, in order to do good, and that the end must justify the means.

Amidst the humiliating weaknesses of our nature which I have described, it is some consolation to reflect, that to the divisions and civil contests of eminent men we owe that constitution which was wont to be our happiness and pride. The genuine use of such divisions is, to watch over the political rights of the people, and to check the irregularities of the executive power; for it must never be forgotten amongst us, that government is the business both of those who are to govern, and of those

those whom the constitution has instituted to controul; nor is it too much to say, that parties still continue to be salutary and beneficial, not only as a check, but as a spur to executive government; except only when they maintain opposite views, affecting the essentials of the constitution; or when they act with intemperate animosity and eagerness in times of foreign negociation and foreign wars. When the last mentioned case arrives (and it is a case which well deserves a full investigation), such divisions more or less impede every exertion of the country, and more or less accelerate every public difficulty and distress, in proportion as the parties are composed of men of rank, abilities, and personal importance. And though such men, by the advantages they enjoy in their country, are obviously most interested to promote its well-being, we find it one of the problems of history, that in every age and in every nation, the most enlightened and honourable minds have been found capable of counteracting, in times of public danger, the known and evident interests both of their fellow-citizens and of themselves. An emulation for well-earned honours, a rivalry for public gratitude, the pre-eminence of intellectual faculties, the preference in wielding the national forces, are all objects which furnish just motives

tives to the exertions of active and generous minds. But in countries where the situations of power are open to the competition of all candidates, it generally happens that the contention is not who shall serve best, but whose services shall be used exclusively of another: and, with respect to this country, your Lordship will recollect, that considerable parties have hung like mill-stones round her neck in all her struggles with foreign powers, from the Revolution to the present hour. To allay the heat which mutual strivings have stirred up, is ever the first object in the commencement of our wars. "Peace at home, and War abroad," has, on such occasions, been the text, from Mr. Davenant down to the political Essayists of our own times: recommendations of unanimity of course accompany the royal communications of the insult received: a coalition of parties is immediately the topic of each moderate and well-meaning orator who moves the address of thanks: the lullaby of faction is forthwith sung by the Poet Laureate; and the triumphs of united Britons are anticipated by others,

"Whom the sisters nine inspire

"With Pindar's rage, without his fire."

It is generally found, however, in the result, that the clamours of faction grow louder amidst the din of war.

That

That a state may be so circumstanced as to render it neither a wicked nor an unwise measure in Ministers

“ To busy giddy minds with foreign quarrel,”

I will not hastily deny; but it is beyond dispute, that such a refinement of policy would, in most instances, be equally profligate and absurd: and with respect to this country it is proved, both by reason and by uniform experience, that foreign wars never produce union among parties within the kingdom. It will indeed sometimes happen, that the favourable or sinister events of wars may reduce one of two existing parties to an acquiescence in the good will and pleasure of the other; but this is a very different consideration, and what no more resembles union, than conquest resembles peace. If, for example, the governing party could ensure a series of brilliant and uninterrupted successes, their antagonists for power might possibly be beaten down in the triumph. A train of disgraces and calamities may, in like manner, produce the secession or annihilation of the governing party; but the events of a commencing war within an extended empire must be chequered and fluctuating; those events which dispirit one party, animate the other; and whenever affairs are unfavourable, or even in suspense, factions

*factions are most powerful. War, therefore, does not naturally produce union; in general it produces only the expectation of defeating rivals; and as soon as those expectations fail, the animosities are higher than ever. It is time only, and the school of adversity, that can bring the parties of this country to hear of those concessions, which must be made, where new conduct is to be reconciled to old systems; where some pretensions are to be waved on both sides; and where many long subsisting difficulties are to be fully reconciled. It is time only, and the school of adversity, that can bring them to hearken to the voice of reason and moderation; and, after having marred and weakened the common interests, to seek that repose and reconciliation which it would have been happy for the public if they had established peaceably from the beginning. In the interval they will continue deaf to accommodation, deaf to the cries of their fellow-citizens, and will drown, in a perpetual clamour, the struggling groans of their country. That time will be spent in vain and endless debates, which should be employed in action and in execution. Old reproaches will be renewed; new ones will be discovered or invented; every measure taken will be severely examined; every measure proposed will be thwarted;*

thwarted; every measure conjectured will be  
*discussed and canvassed; supposed weaknesses*  
 will be amplified; the public resources will be  
 depreciated; and the sense and spirit of the  
 people ~~will be~~ perplexed and depressed by those  
 who have the ability to make the worse appear  
 the better reason. In a word, the national in-  
 terests being sometimes sacrificed, and always  
 subordinate, to the purposes of party, there will  
 be more solicitude to gain an advantage at  
 home, than to reduce a foreign and dangerous  
 enemy. Such an interval is indeed cruel to  
 that respectable part of our countrymen, who  
 love order and detest faction; who, attached  
 to no party, and hitherto happy in the inde-  
 pendence of their own situations, are justly  
 anxious for the well-being of that empire in  
 which their nearest and dearest interests are  
 lodged. • There are many thousands of this de-  
 scription, who sit at this moment in their  
 homes, deploring the miseries into which the  
 prevalence of party resentment has precipitated  
 these kingdoms; and longing to see the nation  
 returned (according to the venerable and af-  
 fecting expression of Lord Clarendon) to its  
 primitive temper and integrity; to its old good  
 manners, its old good humour, and its old good  
 nature. It is indeed the nation, and not merely  
 a party of public men, to whom such a return



is become necessary. Nothing is more true, than that in popular assemblies, acting in times of general danger, the joint councils of a few are often able to obstruct or frustrate the good intentions of all the rest: but when those councils are composed of a third or fourth part of the most considerable men in the kingdom, whose weight, abilities, and activity, enable them to give the tone to a full proportion of their fellow-subjects, the evil does not confine itself to mutilating all the exertions of the state; it goes much farther; it may be said of such parties as I have described, *quod plus exemplo quam peccato nocent*. They have a tendency to infect the whole body of the people, and to loosen all the bands of good government. Arguments and examples are furnished by them to the capricious, the selfish, and the luke-warm, for not taking their share in the difficulties and struggles of their country. The modest perseverance, obedient patience, and habitual discipline of the several professions, which afford to the state its most efficient principles of energy, all gradually wear off: a regular subordination no longer prevails through the different ranks of life: every man of every degree, from the highest to the lowest, becomes a political reasoner: loose enquiry into mis-reported facts, hasty censure, and unbridled  
 license

license of language take place, with a contempt and disparagement of all superiors, and a presumption in every man that he is fit for every thing. The good old Island then ceases to be considered with due affection and veneration; and the veil is torn from those sacred and useful prejudices which were wont to fill the hearts of Englishmen with a generous warmth and enthusiasm.

There is a position, I believe in Machiavel, that a country should sometimes be without order, and over-run with all sorts of calamities, that men of great genius may distinguish themselves by restoring it. Now, we certainly see a country sufficiently disordered and embarrassed to satisfy any speculator in the utmost wantonness of his imagination: I am persuaded too, that we possess many individuals of political talents and genius equal to any that the world ever saw:—but by what means they will attempt to change the narrow spirit of faction into the diffusive spirit of co-operation; by what political alchemy they will purge off the dross of all parties, and reduce them all to the same metal and standard; such genius as theirs only can conceive, such talents as theirs only can describe. I have endeavoured to shew the malignity of the disease, and confess that it is not within the reach of my capacity to point out a method of cure.

But I see also, or think that I see, in the crisis of that malignancy, some symptoms which forbid despondency.

In the first place, and notwithstanding all our animosities, it does not appear that there is, at this moment, any division within the bulk of the people respecting any assignable point of political controversy; whether there has been any such division in the origin and late progress of our calamities, would be an over-curious enquiry, equally invidious and useless, as well as foreign to the temper and tendency of every word that I am now writing. Those calamities are at their height; they surround us, and cannot be shunned by any retrospect. The heavy wars in which we are engaged, are no longer considerations of choice, of honour, or of expediency: they are wars of sad necessity, in actual existence and progression. No thinking man doubts that they are such wars as will furnish ample scope for the co-operation of the steadiest and best councils, and of the bravest and most unremitting exertions, that the collected wisdom and united valour of the nation can supply. I may be told, indeed, and it may be true, that there are controversies within the bulk of the people, as to the merits and demerits of certain classes of public men, or of certain individuals;—  
but

but such controversies are limited and short-lived, and will change their object with the events of the day. When the bulk of the people have no grievance, either real or supposed, respecting the great outlines and essentials of government, it is their disposition, as it is their interest, to give a cordial support and grateful affection to every public man who, in the hour of public danger, exerts himself with zeal and ability; even if that zeal and that ability should be repeatedly crossed by untoward circumstances, instead of leading to early and uninterrupted successes. The bulk of the people neither regard, nor should they wish to regard, the wretched jumble of personal animosity and party craft which prevails among the different candidates for their confidence.

When such ~~are~~ the tone and temper of a country, and when the nature, extent, and fatal tendency of our internal discords are within the observation of all men, and lie heavily on the hearts of all good men, we may persuade without flattering ourselves, that those discords will soon expire; not perhaps by any union between the leading competitors; such an hope must not be entertained, though the moment is ~~for~~ come when every man should cheerfully devote his talents and his life, in whatsoever line,  
either

either civil or military, the voice of his King and Country may deem him fit to act.—But such an hope is, I fear, chimerical.—The effect is more likely to be produced by a ceasing of the competition, which would equally be the consequence of the party in possession finding that they can no longer, consistently with their own honour, or the interest of the State, conduct the public business under the obstructions to *which they are exposed; or of the party in expectation, suspending all farther efforts, either from an acquiescence in the eventual successes of their antagonists, or from a deference to the anxieties of the people.*

In the next place, and whatever may be the probable fate of our discords, whether union, extinction, or even perseverance, it is a comforting symptom, that there is still within the nation, and within the parties which we lament, an extraordinary fund of fine talents and generous feelings.

Of the first we have ample proof in the extreme of our mischief, in that whole system of parliamentary attack and defence which has so long been carried on before our eyes. They are not the mushroom politicians of every age, who could have raised and supported the storm which we see; they are not such statesmen as

may be drawn from behind every desk, who could have held the helm of government through so long and so severe a tempest.

Of the second, we have a touching and glorious instance in the alacrity with which our leading men of all descriptions, dispositions, and parties, have concurred, in calling forth the national force, in giving up the sweets of domestic ease, and in sacrificing to the protection of their country, all the secondary considerations of self-interest, personal constitution, and past habits of life. We see that, by the activity and perseverance of their spirit, they have formed an internal force for Great Britain, which in every respect of appearance, discipline, spirit and effective strength, may challenge the completest military establishment, of equal numbers, that the world can produce. Such men will not rest satisfied with having prevented the invasion of external enemies; they must know, and will feel, that this country never can have a firm existence in time of war, but by the co-operation of all the force and abilities belonging to it, not faintly, but cordially; and as well in councils as in camps.—They will not then permit any man, or any set of men, of any party, who may be as blind as Samson, to act like him in their rage, and to pull down this noble edifice of our ancestors,

though

though they should overwhelm themselves in its ruins. It is still less in the nature of things for that edifice, with such supports around it, to moulder away, and sink piece-meal into ruins; *quod si erro, libenter erro*. It must and will be restored to all its extent (or at least to all its solidity), and stand, the admiration and respect of nations, till time shall be no more.

Under these presumptions, which, however, must be aided by a due confidence in that Providence hitherto found to watch over Great Britain in the hour of danger, we may hope once more to see order, uniformity, dignity and effect restored to all our councils and proceedings. The consequences of such a change upon the spirit and disposition of every rank of men within the kingdom, and its tendency to give equal glory and happiness to the best of sovereigns, are too obvious for farther detail.

I shall now, therefore, quit a subject, on which if I have dwelt too long; either the abundance of matter has deceived me, or I have wanted skill and time to abridge it.

It will be the object of my next Letter to submit to your Lordship a few remarks on the nature of the war in which we are engaged, in the result of which I shall naturally be led to

an examination of our resources.—In treating matters of so much multiplicity, and of some nicety, *flagrante bello*, ideas crowd towards the pen, and the chief difficulty lies in selecting them.

I am, &c.



*Et scissâ gaudens vadit Discordia pallâ :  
Quam cum sanguineo sequitur Bellona flagello.*

VIRG. Æn. lib. viii.

Greenwich, October 24th, 1779.

**I**F I have been fortunate enough to be honoured with your Lordship's attention to the preceding Letter, you will have observed, that, though I endeavour to describe fully and minutely the nature and consequence of party-spirit, I carefully avoid considering, whether any, or what particular proportion, of our misfortunes, may have arisen from that spirit. —I wish indeed to hang a veil over so fruitless, and so irksome a controversy :—

*Quo fonte derivata clades  
In patriam populumque fluxit,*

may be an amusing disquisition for historians of the next century ;—but, unless I could live to the next century, I desire to leave this thesis untouched.

My present wish (I repeat it) is to see things as they are :—It is not

“ To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,”

nor to make any retrospects, unless they can contribute to the two great objects, of union among ourselves, and offensive war with our enemies.

The same sentiments prevail still stronger against recurring to that more remote period of the close of the last war against the united Houses of Bourbon, in order to enquire, whether on the one hand Great Britain, victorious in every quarter of the globe; animated by her successes, and eager to prosecute them; high in her credit, and flourishing in her commerce; regardless of her burdens, and possessing a naval and military force unexampled in the history of any single empire; ought not to have enforced the war through two or three more campaigns, in order to crush beyond recovery the most dangerous combination that ever was formed against the interests of Europe:—or on the contrary, whether the appearances of our greatness at that time, were not rather brilliant than solid; and whether, considering the uncertainties and reverses to which all wars are liable, the acquisitions ceded to us, as the price of peace, were not such as the honour and interests of the kingdom called upon us to accept.

*Cui bono?* is the best answer to such questions whenever they are stated for discussion:—They have no beneficial tendency; they are not the pursuits of any useful understanding. If any man will say that, nevertheless, he now cordially regrets our not having persevered in the

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the last war, I can say so too, because I feel as he does ; but the disquisition will still be fruitless ; nor will it apply fairly to the question, whether, under all circumstances known at the time, those ministers acted unwisely who arrived the peace of Paris.

There are other repinings of a similar complexion :—such as, that by the mode of finishing the last war, we led a principal ally to consider us as unfriendly and even faithless ; that we have ever since remained destitute of alliances, though the urgent need of them was easy to be foreseen ; that the friendships of foreign powers are courted in vain by those who offer no reciprocal equivalent, and will not hazard any branch of commerce, any subsidiary expence, or the contingency of incurring war ; that from the peace of Paris, to the day of M. de Noailles' departure, our system of continental politics has been cramped by the narrow insulated operations of trading prejudices, and exchequer œconomy ; that we now stand friendless in the world, and that the occasions of being otherwise are lost, perhaps for ever.

Again:—That the malevolent intentions of France and Spain, during three years previous to the commencement of this war, were written in legible characters upon every line of all foreign intelligence, and upon every foreign transaction

*transaction* official and extra-official; that it was the extreme of weakness, therefore, in our Ministers to flatter themselves that the reduction of the colonies (admitting their expectation of that event to have been reasonable) would defeat all other designs meditated against us, and re-establish the general tranquillity:—That in their unwillingness to introduce the calamities and hazards of war into Europe, they ought not to have lulled themselves and their country into the sleep of death; but should have disabled the Family Compact, by a sudden and general attack on the Bourbon fleets and possessions.

Again:—That when France had actually commenced the war, by a perfidious, indeed, but great attempt to surprize our fleets and armies in North America, the interval of a year, which we afterwards allowed to Spain, was so much time given to her to place her own trade and possessions in security, and to augment and collect her strength, in order to strike us to the heart; and that we ought not to have been deceived by her overtures of mediation, but should have required her either to disarm, or to declare whilst she was less prepared for war. &c.

In all this display of after-wisdom, we are obliged to take very disputable points for granted,

*granted, in order to form every proposition, after which, we arrive at nothing better than an unproductive lamentation upon the present state of our affairs.—If, however, any of the above, or if any other great national measures, either precautionary or preventive, were clearly wise and practicable, and if in any instance such measures have been culpably neglected (suppositions which I am not prepared either to admit or to refute), they are undoubtedly proper subjects to exercise the justice of the nation in a parliamentary enquiry.—Such an enquiry would probably commence with the old altercations, whether the accusers or the accused have done most public mischief, and what set of men are fittest to manage the future concerns of the nation ; and this tiresome game of cross-purposes would, after a great waste of paper and of language, end in a destruction of much time and attention, that might be otherwise bestowed on the pressing concerns of the nation.*

Without examining then, what may have been the past course of human contingencies, and without busying myself as to what may be the future fate of particular persons, of families, of different connections, or of parties ; I look only to the importance, necessity, and conduct of the war now existing ; to the ad-

vantages and disadvantages of the nation in the present hour of trial; to our practicable resources and probable exigencies:—and in these considerations I share with your Lordship an extreme anxiety, that the pre-eminence of Great Britain among nations may be delivered down unimpaired to our children's children, and to their posterity for ever.

I am, in the private conviction of my own mind, fully satisfied, that if France had not thrown away the scabbard in the beginning of the last year, your Lordship would have had the honour of announcing to this country the recovery of her colonies, and of every permanent and solid advantage that can be drawn from them. I also believe, that if Spain had not declared very early in the present summer, the colonies would still have been recovered in the course of this campaign, and France reduced to a situation of disgrace and distress below any period of the last war. But though these opinions connect themselves with the operations of the present moment, and open a field of future speculation neither unpleasant nor unprofitable, I should not be anxious in the present state of the war to support them by arguments, if they were thought worth disputing.—If any man chuses to believe that France, at the close of the last campaign, did not find, and by  
her

her conduct admit, her own incompetence to maintain the contest in which she had engaged, without other allies than the Rebel Congress, he is welcome to his own creed:—He will at least allow, that Spain, whether induced by French intreaties or not, has now thrown her weight into the scale of the war; and we will leave it to time to decide by what negociations, or other motives, these events have been brought about.

The morality of States certainly takes, and perhaps is intitled to, a much greater latitude than is allowed to the morality of individuals; but it would be too uncandid a treatment even of France and Spain, to suppose that the conduct which they have pursued was the result of system and pre-determination. We may even put out of the question their own solemn and repeated assertions to us; for every ascertained circumstance of their management with the Rebel Agents previous to 1778, shews beyond a doubt, that they neither foresaw, nor meant, the consequences which have ensued.—Very deep reaches of policy exist in the page of history, much oftener than in real life: nations, like the individuals of which they are composed, act generally either from passion, or from contingent circumstances; seldom from long foresight and prescribed system.



*It was indeed consistent with all the workings* of human nature, that the reputation and memory of our former victories over France and Spain, instead of quieting for ever the restless spirit of the Family Compact, should make those powers more alert than ever to injure us, and at the same time more cautious.—They accordingly had, or conceived that they had, an interest in making the rebellion of our Colonies tedious and expensive to us. Every interference for this purpose was forwarded, and in some measure protected, by the increase of their naval establishments; nor were they without some little degree of that suspicion, of which they pretended so much, that it might be the policy of Great Britain, on any sudden recovery of the Colonies, to turn her force against nations which were giving her so much provocation.—Whatever might be the reasonings, the preparations on all sides were gradually increased, and the calamitous campaign of 1777, at length gave ideas to France, which she never before had ventured to entertain.—The circumstances which followed, are too recent in our memories to be repeated.

I give no harsh names to the conduct of either of our enemies;—the cause of our present war with them will soon be as much out of the question as the original principle of the American

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*ican revolt:—in the mean time, it would be* here unmanly railing to apply, to what passes between nations, any of those attributes which would belong to similar transactions in private life. The conduct of Spain was certainly less exceptionable than that of her ally, because her professions of peace and amity towards us were less fervent and less frequent.—It is, however, no railing to add, that the ministers of both these powers exhibited a very undignified piece of mummery, in addressing from their respective courts to all Europe, solemn and separate appeals on the justice of their cause, and the pretended provocation received from Great Britain.

But these matters ought not to excite the passionate feelings of any man who possesses a moderate knowledge of the history and nature of his species:—such a man will know that similar events have happened in every period of the world. He will indeed see with concern any wanton or wicked infringement of those principles which should be kept sacred between nations for their mutual utility. He will perhaps ask himself the ordinary questions, “What must become of the world if such practices become general? How can societies subsist under such disorders? If these wild appetites for power are to have no restraints, will

“ not a perpetual war of all against all be the  
 “ consequence?” He will wish possibly that  
 princes wantonly disturbing the peace of man-  
 kind may meet with exemplary loss and dis-  
 grace. He will be glad to see them branded  
 in history as violators of the rights of na-  
 tions. But his earnest and urgent contem-  
 plation, if he loves his country, will be, in what  
 manner the storm gathering round him may  
 best be resisted.

The plain result of our situation (for we  
 must not cover any part of it from our own  
 eyes) is this:—We are engaged in a war against  
 the united force of France and Spain, under  
 many new and considerable disadvantages.

1. North America, once the strength of our  
 loins, is now become our weakness; and not  
 negatively so; she is actually and extensively  
 employed in the hands of our enemies to weigh  
 us down. I avoid going into detail on this  
 point; it would lead me too far.

2. The bitterness of the above-mentioned cir-  
 cumstance was the less wanting to complete  
 the cup of our misfortunes, when it is con-  
 sidered, that we begin this war, already steeped  
 in taxes to the very lips; and with a national  
 debt of not less than 140 millions sterling,  
 which absorbs almost five millions sterling of  
 our revenue for mere interest.

3. It

3. It has already been stated, that we are destitute of allies.

4. It must also be confessed, that the united fleets of our enemies exceed in number, and in the aggregate of their apparent strength, any naval force that we are yet able to produce.

We are to examine, on the other hand, the favourable particulars, such as they are, and however indirect or indecisive.—For having contemplated the shape and size of our burden, it will be fair to consider the sinews and strength which are to support it.

1. The natural circumstances of our situation first present themselves: they are familiar to us, because every geographical grammar describes them, but they are not the less important; and they are what the combined powers cannot deprive us of, unless they can possess themselves of our island, or (which I ~~trust~~ is equally probable) sink it in the ocean. The particular position of Great Britain upon the globe (in which too her derivative strength from her sister island and kingdom well deserves observation), her extent, climate, shores, productions, and, above all, her ports and harbours, give her many advantages, as well in commerce as in war, which no other nation enjoys or can enjoy.

2. The

2. The established honour and credit of her people in all pecuniary transactions with foreigners, the enterprising and industrious disposition of her manufacturers, and the commercial skill and spirit of her merchants, ensure to her, through a thousand channels, both ostensible and unseen, a large and constant influx of money, which is the support and life of effective war.

3. The bravery and excellence of her mariners (of which 96,000 are at this day actually in the king's service) may, without any colouring of national prejudice, be called peculiar and unrivalled:—the rising strength of her military establishments is next to be observed; and the late exertions towards completing and forming that strength, must, at least, be admitted to have had the merit of success.—But above all, we may contemplate the magnitude of our fleets, and the general complete condition of the ships which compose them. From fleets so constructed, so manned, and so officered, as these are known to be, we have cause for good expectation as to the issue of this struggle, and might perhaps venture to cast anchor at this point of our hope.

In speaking of fleets and armies, I enter into no specification of numbers, which are increasing whilst my words are penning. The  
particulars

particulars of our force are generally and sufficiently known, both to us and to our enemies, for any purposes either of confidence on the one hand, or of serious reflection on the other.

But in stating the effective strength of Great Britain, we should not overlook our privateers, which, whenever the nature of the king's service ceases to restrain them, are in themselves a powerful and active aid in war, and the means of bringing much wealth into our ports.

4. And though it is true, that we begin this war under new and considerable disadvantages, it would be easy, if national situations in different periods were capable of any very satisfactory comparison, to shew, that our situation in former wars has been subject to embarrassments, different indeed from what we now experience, but not less pressing at the time. This, however, would be poor consolation at best; and I might as reasonably remind your Lordship of the wars maintained with success by a few Dutch fishing towns against the whole Spanish monarchy in the zenith of all its strength; and this at one time in circumstances so low, that their state was represented in their own medal by a ship without sails or rudder, with this inscription: "*In-  
certum quo fata ferant.*"

Consola-

Consolations of that stamp are fit only for minds which are verging towards despondency. The resources and virtues of this country are to be called forth by arguments of a very different spirit; by a manly and just appreciation of the nature of this unprovoked war, its necessity, and its importance.

And it will be found, that the eagerness and animosities which, in some wars, seem to arraign our species, and to give an unfavourable picture of mankind, are, in this war, consistent with the best qualities of our nature, and furnish a scene for every great and generous exertion.

The only question between us and our enemies is, whether we are to subsist as a nation, possessing its own liberties, pursuing its own commerce, and observing the rules of justice to all the world? or whether we shall be deprived of our dependencies, be stripped of our maritime power, become total and immediate bankrupts to all the world, and hold a crippled trade and commerce hereafter at the good will and compassion of the House of Bourbon? The stakes, involuntarily indeed deposited on our part, are our Colonies, our Islands, all our commercial establishments and distant possessions, our navy, our foreign garrisons, the free entrance

and use of the different seas, and all the various parts of that complicated machine of trade, credit and taxation, which forms our position among the states of the world.

The declension of a state which has been great and flourishing in its agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, is much more terrible in all its circumstances; than the extreme habitual poverty of another nation that has never experienced better days.

If the superstructure of our greatness should give way, this gaudy scene of national splendor and national happiness, would soon be changed into a dreary picture of general wretchedness and ruin.

Nor would that downfall, melancholy as it is, to contemplate, fill the measure of our woes: we hitherto know little or nothing, within this island, of the calamities of war; but we should, from that hour, be open to those calamities as often as any neighbouring nation might think proper to bring them upon us. In short, we have more to lose than any other nation under Heaven: what we have to gain, exclusive of the recovery of our Colonies, and the reduction of our enemies within due bounds, can be decided only in summing up accounts and signing the pacification.



Such is the predicament in which we stand : —nor is the war which brings it on, a war of choice *to us* : most wars deserving of that name, have proved fatal follies to the nations which have undertaken them. Yet it generally happens that wars are of choice to one of the combatants, and sometimes to both. The wisdom and the foresight, the bodily strength and possible exertions of man, are confined by his nature to narrow limits ; but under these humbling circumstances he conceives high thoughts ; his disposition is restless, his ambition boundless : filling in himself a narrow space, he can labour in his imagination to add dominion to dominion ; and can exert his short-lived faculties to frame remote and immortal designs. If the accidents of birth or situation in society give him a leading influence over multitudes, he can use that power as a scourge to his fellow-creatures, and for the purpose of spreading devastation over the earth. But Providence, in the precarious and complicated difficulties attending all wars, has contrived a salutary check to these airy elevations ; turbulent ambition generally defeats itself, and aspiring monarchies blindly work towards their own destruction. It rarely happens in modern wars, that any successes, however brilliant, are

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weighty

weighty enough to counterbalance the mere expences which they occasion.

5. The natural strength, the commercial pre-eminence, and the naval and military spirit of our country, are considerations of great weight, when aided by a conviction of the unprovoked necessity and essential importance of the war in which we are engaged. Here, then, we come, with much advantage, to that point of our consolation and hope, which is to be found in the very circumstances of our finance and taxation, however unpromising they may appear to the first view.

The nature and necessity of great military force in modern states, form too obvious and too trite a subject to be insisted on. That necessity, as well as the expence attending it, both increase with the progress, advancement and riches of each particular society.

The system of modern war, which spins out contests through several campaigns; the levying and preparation of armies for the field; the recruiting of those armies, which, in the civilization of present times, can only be effected by drawing individuals from manufacture, agriculture, and other lucrative employments; the pay and subsistence of armies so formed; their transport from place to place; their clothing, arms, camp equipage, ammunition

and artillery, articles of great cost (to which, in the instance of maritime states, must be added, the immense and complicated charge of naval force):—all these considerations united, have made the modern science of war a business of expence unknown to former times. Perhaps it would not be difficult to shew that it is become, in great measure, a science of money; but it will be sufficient for the present purpose, to admit that there are great and evident advantages on that side which is the most opulent, and can best and longest support the charge of a contest.

It seems to be the plain and settled policy of this country, in a war like the present, to have a well regulated army properly stationed for any purpose of immediate defence against sudden invasion, and sufficiently large to deter an enemy from landing in force, in order to make a settlement or continued war. The old and favourite idea of trusting chiefly to our wooden walls, will again be wise, when we are again decidedly in possession of our old and favourite superiority at sea. At present, the predilection for wooden walls would be a fatal disadvantage, if it led us to use them as if they were fixed into our coast for its defence. The old saying of De Witt, relative to one of our Kings, "*Imperator Maris, Terræ Dominus*," is wise  
only

only when properly construed. Fleets employed to cover a coast, are not only precarious in their exertions, which depend much on winds, but are miserably confined as to all the effects of naval war. Those effects are only felt when our fleets can keep the sea, in order to protect our commerce, and annoy that of our enemies, as well as to defend our distant possessions, and to cover descents and continual incursions. Such objects, however, cannot be pursued, nor can we in wisdom hazard anything, whenever the state of our internal defence is such as to require the presence of our fleets for the protection of our dock-yards, of our ports, and even of our metropolis. •

It is for these reasons that the late efforts of this country, to make herself internally strong, afford very auspicious hopes of the ensuing years (for years I fear it must last) of this war. —Our fleets will hereafter have a full liberty of action and exertion.

In completing this system of internal strength, it is, perhaps, to be regretted, that the original idea of our militia must gradually wear off. —A recruit for that body of men must begin to mean the same thing as a recruit for mere mercenary troops; and the militia itself will, in effect, become a disciplined and well exercised standing army; it will, however, retain the

bear.—And it was the assertion of our best political writers, prior to the late war, that our debt (then seventy-two millions) had brought us to the brink of inevitable bankruptcy : yet the debt was doubled in that war ; and though our taxes were multiplied much beyond any detail that can come within the compass of these letters, our situation both in credit and in commerce was at the close of that war more flourishing than ever.

*On ne monte jamais si haut que quand on ne sait pas où on va*, said Cromwell to the president de Bellievre. This idea may be applicable to our present debt and exertions. We are not, indeed, to proceed with a careless speed, unsuspicious of consequences, and insensible of the precipice towards which we are advancing. Our situation obliges us to go on ; we have only to use the best caution that we can.—Means must be found ; the choice only of those means, as far as there is any choice, is material. It would be a stupid and wilful blindness not to see the difficulties to which we are tending. But the question is, are those difficulties necessary ? If they are necessities, we must meet them like necessities. The exertions already made go far beyond what might have been thought practicable, if  
we

we had hesitated about the state of our finance, and had not felt that we are contending for the sources from which that finance is drawn.

In the course of a war, it sometimes happens that the original object becomes a purpose of the second or third magnitude. The original great object of this war is the recovery of our Colonies (and we should never lose sight of that object); but our first purpose at present is to establish our superiority at sea against France and Spain. If by our naval exertions we can effectually protect our commerce, and preserve our carrying trade; our riches, the life of war, are as safe as our springs or rivers; and floods of treasure will flow into the kingdom with every tide.

In a wide extended empire like this, the occasional loss of very valuable possessions and dependencies will be the fate of every contest in which we are engaged; but these circumstances, though cruel to our feelings at the time, may be set right at the close of a war. Our exertions must not be checked by a daily dread of such contingencies. ~~If~~ we are to waste our strength in guarding against rumours, and in protecting by our fleets every accessible corner,

we may rest assured that every wind will bring us an account of some new loss. A war carried on by this country, must be a war of enterprise, and not of defence; the advantages of the former are peculiar to Great Britain.— In the opening indeed of a war, whilst the force of the country is forming, and whilst proper means are taking to strengthen the accessible parts of the coast, it may be right to keep our principal fleet within reach; because it is always the wisdom of a state to adapt its situation to its circumstances; but we must never forget that this is not our natural mode of making war.

No private man of moderate discretion will attempt to enter into any specification of measures to be pursued. If he is ill informed, his advice will be presumptuous; if he happens to be right (which is unlikely except in very obvious instances), his speculations may be mischievous; those only who are so situated as to receive all informations, and who know the force to be spared, together with the possible combinations of that force in regard to other collateral objects, can decide what measures are proper to be pursued. And it is happy when that decision is reposed in able capacities, with-

but which the uses of wealth, of national vigour, and of the other resources of war, must be of very uncertain avail.

The successful conduct of war is a business, of invention as well as of deliberation; it depends much on sudden, secret, frequent, and well concerted enterprizes; varying the point of attack, and often connected with and supporting each other.

This success is also much promoted by inspiring a confidence in all employed, that merit will be rewarded, and misconduct strictly and severely punished: the multitude love valour even when it is unsuccessful, and it is the interest of the State to second and support that sentiment.

It is farther the interest of the State to establish through its armies and navies, a firm persuasion that the professional point of honour is a zeal for the public, superior not merely to personal regards (for personal courage, and the disregard of personal hardships, are qualities which Englishmen never want), but superior to all caprice, private passion, and sudden disgust.

Last of all, our exertions must be unremitted and persevering; we must not be startled by



the untoward events of a day : if we mean to proceed with honour, and to end with success, we must never in our actions or councils hesitate or shrink, as if we thought the business too weighty for us.

It is certainly to be regretted that we are destitute of allies, but we must not forget that interest is the only efficient principle of alliance. Interest indeed may act through very different mediums. It may be the interest of neutral powers, not to suffer the aggressors in war to break unprovoked through all the usages of good faith established between nations, and to disturb the peace of the world, in order to aggrandise themselves. Again, it may be their interest not to permit the balance of power in Europe to be put in hazard ; and though that balance in our times has had great changes, it is demonstrably the interest of all the leading empires to maintain it in its present position. Again, it may become the interest of a power bound to us by old treaty, to establish an opinion of her own good faith ; or it may be the interest of a power to assist us merely from a recent or customary interchange of friendship, or from considerations of commerce : but all these are interests of which the particular nation

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tion concerned must and can be the only judge.

Great Britain stands among nations, like an armed man amongst his fellow-creatures, in the iron age of the world; she has some menacing enemies, and many spectators. If she calls for help, it will not be given to her till she has shewn that she has strength and resolution, such as will make her an useful ally, rather than a dangerous friend. The great principle of alliance, the only solid and effective one, is a right resulting from a firm and dignified national courage to ask other powers to become sharers in our strength, and not partners in our weakness. This right we shall soon acquire, if we entertain a just sense of our own circumstances; those circumstances are critical, but they are the critical circumstances of a great and mighty nation.

Having laid so much stress on the hope to be drawn from the power of this country to support the expence of the war, I mean, in another Letter, to offer to your Lordship some remarks respecting our debt, credit, and supplies.

I cannot, however, relinquish this subject without observing, that the popular jealousy respecting

specting the due disbursement of treasure given for carrying on the public services, is equally natural and commendable. The truth is, that war and œconomy are not easily reconciled:—the exigencies are extensive and various; and those who supply them have, in all wars, been accused of regarding the wealth of the nation as inexhaustible. Living amidst profusion, they have been said to grow careless of any charge that could be brought to account; and though it might be harsh and unjust to infer that they had learnt to make up accounts with dexterity, the suspicion was at all times the less unreasonable, as it has been found, from uniform experience, that the annual expence of our wars increased every year of their continuance, beyond any apparent increase of services performed;—exclusive also of arrears accumulating by seamen's wages, army extraordinaries, transport bills, ordnance debentures, &c. The delay, too, in settling public accounts, has always been very great; and the manner in which some of considerable magnitude are stated, is not obvious to every capacity.

But on the other hand, œconomy in war is often a most short-sighted virtue; and when it tends

tends to parsimony, or a defalcation from useful services, it becomes a wretched management, for which the nation in the event pays twenty-fold.

I am, &c.



*Jamque nocens ferrum, ferroque nocentius aurum  
Prodierat, prodit bellum quod pugnat utroque,  
Sanguineâque manu crepitantia concutit arma.*

Ovid. Met. l. 1.

Greenwich, Oct. 29, 1779.

NOTHING being more easy than a desultory progress of the imagination over the open fields of domestic dissension and foreign war, I have advanced thus far in the proposed plan of my Letters to your Lordship, perhaps in less time, and I fear with much less reflection, than ought to have been allotted to subjects of such importance. The truth is, in adhering strictly to my first idea of avowing honestly the natural and current reasonings of a plain mind, upon circumstances known to every man in the kingdom, I have pushed forward without fear or wit, and am now brought to recollection by finding myself at a point where the mere result of first impressions must not be hazarded; and whence it will be difficult to advance without much better aids than any that I possess.

The multitude of objects which the considerations now before me embrace; the comparisons and combinations to which they lead; and the necessity which will arise in every page, of forming opinions upon disputable and unsettled points of finance; make this part of my

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undertaking

undertaking a matter of much anxiety : I must bespeak more than ordinary indulgence for the execution of it ; and I feel my claim to that indulgence the more reasonable, because I do not mean to entrench myself behind a parade of accounts with which the parliamentary Journals, and some more useful books, would furnish me : still less shall I enter into any of those discussions which seem calculated rather to perplex the understanding, than to simplify the subject : I shall gain my purpose, if, without deep researches (which I leave to stronger minds), I can see reason to rest persuaded, that under all the known circumstances of the public debts and their consequences, we still possess ample war-resources, without materially affecting the flourishing state of our manufactures, commerce, and agriculture, any farther than war must affect them, in all countries and at all times.

The spirit of trade, which has been so fortunate for this country in its operations and effects, has not always been kindly disposed towards the true and liberal principles either of commerce or taxation ; and it must be confessed, that the present system of our trade and revenue laws, though in appearance less burdensome, and in fact more productive, than the system of any other nation, is, when  
analysed,

analysed, in some of its parts, a very motley mixture of political œconomy and popular prejudice. The intricate questions and considerations necessarily springing from subjects of such extent, nicety, and variety, have been rendered more intricate by the industry of different writers, some of whom have adapted all their reasonings to support the state-financier of the day, whilst others have been equally anxious to represent his measures as replete with danger and ruin, either to trade, or agriculture, or population, according to the object in dispute. Much error and obscurity has also been imported from France, and manufactured too at home, by men who come under the opposite description of shallow thinkers and abstruse thinkers, and who, without any unfair or interested view, have been, perhaps, equally successful in deceiving themselves and perplexing others. These insinuations, however, are in no degree applicable to the immediate writers of our own time, who are making a very rapid progress in destroying the absurdities and explaining the fallacies of their predecessors : and though eminent men still differ on important points of political œconomy, we are beginning, at last, to comprehend all the just causes of our wealth and prosperity, about the time that ruin and wretchedness are supposed (even by some



*of our best instructors) to be staring us in the face.*

These alarming phantoms are created chiefly by the state of the public debts (amongst other less general causes); and in order to bring before our eyes a just idea of those debts, and of their rise and progress, it will be necessary to call to mind, in the fewest words possible, the different objects of national expence.

The religious establishment should be first mentioned, and is likely to have engaged due attention in the earliest infancy of societies. In addition to the exclusive possessions secured in this country from the public to the church, the tythes have been considered by some as a species of appropriated taxes. It is perhaps just matter of regret, that an equivalent support has not been furnished in some more favourable to agriculture and improvements.

The support of the sovereign dignity is another branch of public expence. Formerly in this country the expenditure of the sovereign included all the charges of civil and military government:—the revenue of the crown was only aided by the people when the emergency grew great, and they were disposed to give their aid. But from the nature of the constitution, and the increasing progress of public expence, this system became a matter of constant uneasiness both to the prince and people,  
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*and a separate private revenue, now called the Civil List, was assigned to the crown.*

The expence of justice next presents itself. No state, or large society of men, ever existed without an establishment of judicial authority, which has, however, in its first institution been always very imperfect. In our own history, the tribunals of justice were for some centuries a source of revenue, and the judges resembled tax-gatherers. In the evolution of our constitutional liberty, the judicial power was made, in great measure, independent of the executive;—and the support of our judges became an object of national regard. But the expence is inconsiderable, and bears no proportion to the advantage resulting from the wisdom, dignity, and purity of those who are the objects of it.

There are other objects of public expence, such as public works, public institutions, roads, bridges, ports, &c. but many of these, from their general utility, have very early been converted into sources of revenue.

But the great occasion of expence is the national defence. In the early state of civilization, when incursions between neighbouring societies were either to be attempted or resisted, the service was so short, and the general danger so pressing, that it was easy for the parties to support

support themselves, and natural for them to serve without pay. In the early periods of our own history, it was usual for the great men of the kingdom to attend the sovereign during his wars, in person, with their vassals, and to support them also in the field. This, however, being in itself a partial species of taxation, and often extremely severe, was soon either exchanged for money, or, where continued in any degree, was, among other feudal hardships, a cause of much heart-burning. In the progress of arts, that of war underwent perhaps the greatest change, and the revolution made in the system of warfare induced another in that of military establishments : the art of war from an occasional occupation became a trade. And it was found a matter not of mere equity but of necessity, that those who undertook the military duties of the state should be maintained in their absence by their fellow-citizens, who staid at home, and retained the peaceable advantages of agriculture and manufactures.

It is unnecessary to pursue this subject of enquiry through all its progress and improvements ; the result is, that in all modern societies, a proportion of the people who do not serve in the wars, but pursue productive labour at home, must, exclusive of their own maintenance, maintain those who are employed in

the defence of the country, and also all individuals in other professions and situations, who produce nothing to the common stock. Subject to this observation, it has been commonly calculated, that it is certain ruin to a country to employ more than the one hundredth part of its people in military service (which of course includes ships of war):—this, however, must be received as applicable only to the general system of a country, and not to times of emergency. Our armies and navy in the present year employ in actual service at least one-fiftieth part of all the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland—taken upon the large computation of ten millions. I shall not enter into the disputed question upon the proportion in which the national stock is diminished by expence of fleets and armies, and how far that proportion is affected by the different circumstances of the expence being at home or abroad: but it must be admitted, that the long absence of one-fiftieth part of all our inhabitants from productive labour, which is the source of commerce and revenue, would much impoverish the state, and tend to its ruin:—and I have stepped out of my way to bring forward this remark, as one inducement to us to obviate that ruin by accelerating our exertions.

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The several objects of public expence above mentioned, imply the necessity of a public revenue belonging either to the sovereign or to the state, or to be drawn by contributions or taxes from the people.

It was the practice of antiquity to make provision of public treasure in time of peace, as the instrument either of conquest or defence; and this was necessary, as there was little confidence in the state in general, and especially in times of danger and confusion. But as it does not happen, in the progress of luxury and expence, that there is in modern states a public revenue either in land or stock, or any public ~~heard~~ in itself sufficient to supply the expence in war, as well as in peace, the deficiency must be made up by the contribution of private revenue for public purposes. The enemy threatens, and is in motion: an army must be augmented, and all the charges belonging to it are to be provided for; fleets must be fitted out; fortifications must be repaired, and garrisons supplied.—But the coffers of the state are found empty. Here then commences the art of finance, which is to draw from individual superabundance what is absolutely necessary for general relief.

This art of drawing money from the pockets of the people, when once introduced into a country,

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country, advances most rapidly. There is a promptitude in all statesmen to improve it, and to adopt also with the utmost liberality of sentiment, and without local prejudice, the rising improvements of other countries. On the other hand, there is an universal disposition in mankind to set themselves as much as possible against this species of dexterity.

The reluctance of individuals to be taxed operates certainly as a check on the alacrity of Ministers to tax them: but it is this reluctance which first suggests to a Minister the idea of running a country into debt; and it also induces the people to acquiesce in his loading posterity with a burden, if the machine can for the present go the lighter for it.

Besides, in the urgent expences of a commencing war, the produce of taxes comes in too slow to answer the purpose. It is an obvious measure, then, to borrow on the credit of the state, and when that is nearly exhausted, to help it forward by assignments of accruing taxes, the produce of which is accordingly anticipated. In all commercial free states there are lenders sufficient, because merchants have at all times a proportion of their capital, and of the average returns of trade, within their reach. Their natural confidence in the state where their property is lodged, leads them to

trust that state; but if they think that there is any unusual risk, the collateral advantages which they exact will be raised in proportion. As they may soon want to use their money in the progress of their trade, they of course require the obligation from the state to be transferrable; and by the transfer which the first creditors make, the trial of the confidence reposed in the state grows more general. The readiness to lend increases the disposition to borrow, and the facility of getting money lessens the anxiety to save. Taxes at first pledged for a limited time are now mortgaged for farther loans and longer periods, and at length are converted into perpetual annuities.

This mode of raising money is the least unpleasing to the people, because large sums are obtained for small annual taxes; and even when those annual taxes are multiplied, the expenditure of the sums raised upon them furnishes occupations which benefit the mass of the people, and is a source of great and interesting events, which amuse and fill their imaginations, even when the events, upon the whole, are unfavourable to the public interests. The contingencies of a great war are the caparisons and bells, which by their show and jingle induce a poor animal to jog on cheerfully under a great load.

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On the ceasing of a war, it may happen that the produce of the taxes is high enough to make some progress towards the reduction of the debt incurred; but even in times of peace some untoward event will arise, or some favourite expence is to be incurred; and in either case it is more pleasant, both to the ministers and the people, to leave the debt undiminished than to call for a new contribution.

Thus the progress is short and plain. The borrowing commenced on the faith and security of the sovereign or state; when that pledge was stretched as far as it would go, the old resource both in this and other countries was to lodge pawns; accordingly Henry III. gave to the Archbishop of York *poteſtatem impignorandi jocalia Regis ubicunque in Angliâ pro pecuniâ perquirendâ*; and there are many similar and much later instances. When this expedient was exhausted, recourse was had to the people, and it was not unusual for a King of England to address his subjects in the following strain: "*Pauper sum omni deſtitutus theſauro, neceſſe habeo ut me juvetis, nec aliquid exigo niſi per gratiam.*" In the progress of hiſtory, the defence of the kingdom became the joint concern of the Parliament with their Sovereign, and large revenues were raiſed for the public expenſiture. The practice of anticipating was



next introduced, and the income of particular taxes was assigned to discharge the debt within a stipulated term. But as it grew convenient to surcharge these anticipations, and to postpone all payment of the principal debt, the assignments were prolonged, and at length made perpetual.

But the failure of some taxes thus mortgaged, the surplus of others, and the complicated management of them all, made it an object of convenience to throw several classes of the public debts into one, which completed the system of funding.

I trust that your Lordship will think this account of the whole business more natural, and therefore more probable, than the refinements which ascribed the introduction of this system, soon after the Revolution, first, to political foresight and design, in order to secure the attachment of individuals to government, from the dependence of their property on its support and security; secondly, to a disposition in ministers to multiply places, and gain patronage; thirdly (which is a mere absurdity), to the views of increasing the capital property of the kingdom.

This system of large and continued anticipations was carried to a considerable extent in Spain, by Philip II. in the sixteenth century; and

and towards the end of the seventeenth century was stated by Mr. Davenant to this country, as the principal cause which had contributed to sink the Spanish monarchy. But he foretold indeed at the same time, that trade must languish here till the annual burdens could be reduced below four millions.

Funding began in France about a century later than in Spain, and Mr. Colbert is said to have remonstrated strongly against it.

From the first commencement of this practice in England, it was a subject of perpetual lamentation with well-meaning writers; and anticipations of our ruin attended every anticipation of the revenue till 1717, when the increased produce of taxes, the falling of the market-rate of interest, and the expiration of annuities, having combined to create a large annual surplus, Sir Robert Walpole instituted the sinking fund. Nor should it pass unnoticed, that this wise and salutary institution was a subject of ridicule and sarcasm to a considerable party, then acting in opposition to the Minister.

It is beyond a doubt, that if the sinking fund had always been sacredly appropriated according to its first institution, the aggregate effects of such a system would have been of that stupendous importance which Dr. Price has demonstrated. But it should not escape remark, that  
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if this plan had been adopted, all the existing taxes must have been continued; and all new exigencies of war, as well as the deficiencies of the peace establishment (the latter alone amounting to about a million sterling, for many years, above the ordinary unappropriated revenue), must have been defrayed and made good, either by supplies raised within the year, or by funds to be secured by new and perpetual taxes. It is obvious to see in this case, what immense burdens, additional to what were actually laid, the country must have borne from 1717 to this time.

Dr. Price has, however, shewn in a very striking point of view, the progressive consequences of accumulating interest; and though the present is rather an inauspicious moment to discuss schemes for paying the national debt, there can be no doubt that much good might result to the kingdom, if, even now, a certain proportion of the annual produce of the sinking fund were vested in parliamentary directors, having perpetual succession, and subject to proper cautions and securities for the purpose of discharging certain portions of the public debt, at such time, and in such manner, as they might find most convenient; this fund to accumulate by the appropriation of the interest of the debts discharged. If such a trust were

well administered, it would comprehend all the advantages of an actual saving and compound interest, and would either check the depreciation of public security, or turn it to the public profit.

It was soon discovered that a sinking fund, however well calculated to pay old debts, was, at least, equally well suited to facilitate the contracting new ones; being always at hand, as a subsidiary mortgage to new taxes of doubtful produce:—nor would this mischief have been great, but it was also discovered, that the produce of the sinking fund itself was an object of much convenience in times either of imaginary or real emergency, by preventing the necessity of some taxes, and evading, consequently, the feelings and observation of the people.

Great incroachments were accordingly made upon the sinking fund, in time of peace, and a total alienation of it in time of war. And it has not, I believe, in the course of sixty-two years, been applied towards paying more than twenty-three millions of the public debts. To relieve the present exigency, is the object of statesmen, who feel themselves in duty bound to consult the ease of their contemporaries, in preference to the eventual convenience of a remote posterity, which they will  
never

never see, or the tacit approbation of a few speculative men.

Our public debt, which began in the nine years war immediately following the Revolution, was about fourteen millions sterling at the death of King William. At the death of Queen Anne it amounted to fifty millions. In 1722, it was fifty-five millions; 1726, it was fifty-two millions; 1739, after seventeen years peace, it was forty-seven millions; from which period I beg leave to refer your Lordship to the following note: I do not recollect whence it is drawn, but it is at least sufficiently accurate to answer the general purposes before us.

1740	£. 46,382,650 Debt.
	<u>31,784,256 increase during the war.</u>
1749	78,166,906 Debt.
	<u>3,089,641 decrease during the peace.</u>
1755	75,077,265 Debt.
	<u>71,505,580 increase during the war.</u>
1763	146,582,845 Debt.
	<u>10,639,784 decrease during the peace.</u>
1775	135,943,061 Debt.

The result of all this is, that by the burdens inherited from our ancestors, we are obliged,  
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including the expence of collecting, to pay in time of profound peace near twelve millions sterling annually; and if the mortgaged part of that revenue were free, we should possess supplies actually raised within the year, nearly adequate to the support of a very vigorous war, though not indeed so extensive as that of 1761, when the public expence amounted to nineteen millions sterling. It is an observation rather of curiosity than of use; but your Lordship will find, I believe, that all the sums levied upon the subjects of this kingdom in ninety years (being from the Revolution to the present time), for public services, have amounted to about seven hundred millions sterling, of which about two hundred millions have actually been paid for the interest of public debts.

In considering our actual situation, the effects of such a debt as I have described certainly deserve attention.

1. It is some inconvenience that we are made tributary to foreign nations, by the obligation to pay to them a large sum annually, for the interest of their property lodged in our funds. \*Opinions differ much as to the amount of this interest, but it cannot be estimated at less than one million sterling.—And so large a drain would turn the exchange

too perceptibly against us, if the favourable balance of our trade (by whatever mode effected) did not operate to restore the level.

Having mentioned this circumstance of exchange, I shall digress for a moment to observe, that the course of exchange is at this day (29th October) more in our favour with Cadiz, Lisbon, Genoa, and Leghorn respectively, than it was in a medium estimate which was printed for the year 1770. With Amsterdam and Hamburg it is much less against us now than it was then; with Paris and Venice it is now nearly at par, but in 1770 was much against us.

To men who consider the course of exchange as a criterion of national commerce and riches, this account must appear highly favourable to us; and the presumption, as far as it goes, certainly is so. It must be confessed, however, that no decisive conclusions are to be drawn from the course of exchange; which is made irregular by transfers of stocks, receipts of dividends, and mercantile combinations for the purpose of drawing and re-drawing through different parts of Europe, as well as from various other more minute circumstances. The exchange, if not counteracted by other transactions and speculations of merchants, should evidently be in our favour whenever our ex-  
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port trade flourishes; because the balance must be remitted to us: but it may also be in our favour, even when certain branches of our commerce, both outwards and homewards, are suffering much, and nearly in a state of stagnation, because there may be large balances in course of remittance to English Merchants; as in the present instance of Cadiz and Madrid, where the price of exchange is at  $36\frac{1}{2}$ , and the par at 43. Here it is only a symptom that a tide is setting in, which may soon ebb with equal or greater velocity to some other part of the world. And in all other instances, the course of exchange between any two specified places is liable to be raised or lowered by the dealings and interchange of both with many other countries.

The price of bullion (which, however, bears also a favourable appearance at present) is still less a certain thermometer of commerce than the course of exchange; for it is equally a subject of mercantile speculations and finesse, and is also liable to be affected by the state of any particular manufactures using the precious metals; by the arrival in Europe of a Spanish or Portuguese flota; by wars in Russia and in the interior part of Germany, both distant from the center of distribution; by the state of remittances of bullion to or from the East Indies;



and by the various other contingencies of trade which affect the value of that commodity in the market.

But though these points of observation do not prove much as to commerce, nor decisively as to the quantity of money in a country, they afford at least a fair presumption, that the national wealth is not diminished.

2. Another principal inconvenience of the public debts is to be seen in all the transactions of public borrowing. There is of course a great competition of lenders, because there is a general expectation of certain gain. If the sum to be borrowed is very large, a proportion of the money to furnish it will be drawn either from channels of productive labour, which are accordingly impeded, or from the holders of public stock, which is consequently depreciated. The general rule of interest to be paid for money is indifferent to the subscribers of a public loan; because whatever it is, they are to enhance upon the public—and the advantages, or *douceurs* (for money-lenders in their exertions against France make good use of her language), are at all times intrinsically worth more than what is computed and stated to parliament; and though, from the ordinary modes of subscription, those advantages (in whatever form

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given) are much divided by transfers within forty-eight hours after the bargain is declared, the expence of the nation is the same, whether the first subscribers, or the subsequent stockholders receive the benefit. This tendency of public borrowings to raise the interest of money through the country, has extensive and bad effects in respect to trade, agriculture, and the value of land; and it tends also to depreciate the public funds, much beyond the operation of any doubts or uneasiness as to their state or safety.

It is, in our days, clearly understood, that the interest given for money is not regulated by the proportion of gold or silver actually existing within the country; but by the demand for borrowing, and the state of commerce and industry which regulate the competition for lending.

And though, at present, we in truth borrow at a rate fully equal to 5 *per cent.* (considering the advantages above described) and perhaps at a higher rate of interest than in any period of the two last wars; yet this is so little the effect of a scarcity of money, or of a want of confidence in the ability of the nation, that the contrary is the fact, and was proved by the continued rise of stock above the price stated at the last loan; as well as by the great premium,

mium, at which it is known to have been current before any transfers were actually made to under-purchasers; and also by so great a proportion of the whole loan as near five millions being paid in the first two months, at a discount at the rate of *3 per cent. per ann.* Mr. Hume has shewn, beyond dispute, that interest is a true barometer of the state; and the lowness of interest is an infallible sign of a flourishing people: but he did not mean to apply that remark indiscriminately to all the occasional situations of a state. In periods of particular emergency, where there is an extreme pressure for money, the interest may be high, and the people still flourishing. And though it is true that low interest and plenty of money are, in fact, generally concomitant; it is equally true, that the sudden influx of money may, for a time, lower interest without introducing a plenty: and it is also true, that a great demand for money will raise the interest, without implying any scarcity. It is demonstrable that, in time of peace, a kingdom would suffer little if half its money were annihilated, or locked up in the coffers of the state: prices of labour, and its produce; would be lowered; other countries would be underfold: the level would be restored, and the prices would gradually rise again. In time of peace, too, there  
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may be less coin and more paper in circulation ; but the quantity of circulating cash in time of war is of the utmost importance ; and therefore I have been the more solicitous to offer to your Lordship these remarks on the present rate of interest.

The inconveniencies above mentioned are very poorly compensated by the bare consideration that the funds are an easy and profitable security to mercantile people in general, and particularly to the merchants who reside in the metropolis, and who having a mortgage for such part of their property as they can spare, bearing interest and transferrable in an hour, by stepping fifty yards from their counting-house, can afford to sell their commodities cheaper. In other respects, the easy transference of stock is no comprehensible benefit to the nation ; and it is remarked by a very eminent writer on this subject, that the political mischief to this kingdom would be very considerable, if Change-alley and all its inhabitants were for ever buried in the ocean.

3. I have seen it described as one bad consequence of the public debts, that the creditors of the public are maintained by the contributions of the poor, and the labour of the industrious. This, however, is only a melancholy

*choly way of stating, that when poor men owe money, it is inconvenient to them to pay it.*

There is more solidity in the objection to the funds, as giving too much influence to the crown : the increase of taxes being ever attended with an augmentation in the profits, or with an increase in the number of revenue-officers.

4. But the great inconvenience of the funding system, results from the complication and weight of the taxes which it has occasioned.

Our friend Mr. Adam Smith, whom political science may reckon a great benefactor, has discussed this subject so fully, that it is hardly possible to say any thing new with regard to it ; but it is, nevertheless, material to consider how the established principles of taxation apply to the situation in which we find ourselves.

The equality of taxation consists in the obliging every individual to contribute in proportion to the revenue which he enjoys within the state ;—the taxes laid for this purpose should be certain, and as convenient as they can be made with respect to the time, manner, and quantum of the contribution. They should keep as little out of the pockets of the people as possible ; they should not bear hard upon any branch of industry ; and they should steer clear of all oppression.

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*The revenue on which they are to operate* results from rent, profit, or wages. With respect to the first, it is for the benefit of agriculture that the taxes on land should be according to some fixed regulation or settled estimate (as in England), and not variable according to the progress or declension of the value of each landed estate; for such variations amount to a bounty on bad husbandry, and a penal law against improvement. The amount of capital stock (though in some degree assessed in England) is difficult to be regularly taxed; because a state, and especially a mercantile state, should avoid any severe inquisition into the circumstances of individuals.

The wages of labour should in no case be made an object of direct taxation.

Taxes on consumable commodities include a large extent of objects; and though they operate, in general, according to the voluntary humour of the individual, reach all the three sources of revenue, the rent of land, the profits of stock, and the wages of labour.

In selecting consumable commodities for taxes, luxuries should invariably be preferred to the necessities of life, and to the raw materials of manufacture. It is admirably contrived by Nature, that every thing useful to the life of man arises from the ground, but few things to that degree of usefulness of which they are

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capable;

capable ; and the same idea applying strongly to many articles of luxury, there is, between the first existence of consumable commodities, and the time of their consumption, an extensive field to engage the ingenuity and vigilance of financiers. Yet taxes on consumable commodities will never be productive of a very considerable income to the state, unless they extend to luxuries of general use ; the aggregate consumption of the inferior ranks of people, being much greater both in quantity and in value, than that of the opulent, who form, in every state, a very small proportion of the whole number :—at the same time it should be observed, that to the happiness and affluence of the lower classes, comparative with the same classes in other nations, we are to look for the real health and strength of the kingdom.

It is difficult, however, to draw a strict line between luxuries and necessities, many articles of clothing, furniture, and provision, being rendered necessary to the individual by the usages of his country and the opinion of his equals. A due distinction can only be made by the discernment and good temper of the state, which should ever remember, that taxes directly striking at the actual necessities of life, operate like the barrenness of the earth, or the inclemency of the heavens.

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Some proportion should be observed in throwing the burdens between the owners of land and of capital stock, the great sources of revenue; otherwise the one will cease to improve agriculture, or the other will be disposed to remove his capital from trade. The various objects of taxation, which do not come strictly under the description either of land-taxes or duties on consumable commodities, will furnish our Legislature with sufficient means to attain this end.

There are cases in taxation where we may cut off the roots in attempting to extend the branches. It should not escape remark, that a very enhancement of a particular duty, operates to lessen the produce of the antecedent duty, and that the new produce will sometimes be less than the produce of the old tax;—according to Dean Swift's maxim, that in the custom-house arithmetic, two and two do not always make four. In the well-known instances of augmenting the duties on gum senegal, and reducing those on teas, the consequences were, that the increased rate diminished, and the lowered rates increased the produce of the respective taxes.

The freedom of exportation should be kept sacred, and be untouched by taxes, except in a very few articles, when it may be found expedient to make a tax operate in the nature of a prohibition,



prohibition, or to favour some particular manufacture.

It is to a certain degree true, that taxes impel labour; and if it were possible for this country to pay all her debts, a reasonable doubt might arise, whether it would be expedient for her to reduce her taxes, farther than a few exceptionable ones which affect the necessaries of life, and the materials of manufacture.

Whilst taxes amount only to a deduction from the conveniencies of the individual for the public service, they may be extended, without scruple, as far as the public exigency requires: but there is a certain point where they begin to be exorbitant and destroy industry, by producing despair in the industrious. To toil incessantly in want, is too hard a condition for human nature to bear; yet an industrious country may long continue rich under severe taxes, as a strong and active body may enjoy health under unwholesome diet and hard labour.

It would answer little purpose to enter here into a deduction of our contributions and taxes, from their origin, and to state to your Lordship the danegeldts, escuages, carucages, tallages, purveyances, ransoms of Jews, dismes, quinzimes, and benevolences.—The progress towards any liberal notions of taxation was slow;

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so late as the 31st Henry VI. taxes were laid on every stranger abiding six weeks in England; in the reign of Edward VI. there was a poll-tax on sheep; under the usurpation of Cromwell, a weekly meal was a favourite contribution; and even under William III. there was a regular act of parliament to levy a tax on all marriages. Principles of commerce seem not to have engaged the parliamentary attention before the æra of the Rebellion, and articles of export trade were to a late period a principal branch of the Customs. Our trade regulations, including the various detail of prohibitions drawbacks and bounties, are since become extremely voluminous, and by the daily accessions of a century, have certainly contracted many defects, and much intricacy; nor is there a doubt but that they might be simplified and revised with much advantage both to commerce and revenue.

For the present, however, it seems sufficient to observe, that our system of taxation, though obliged to comprehend so large a variety of objects, and drawing such immense sums from the people, is in general guided by just principles of political œconomy, and has been found thus far apparently compatible with the industry, affluence, and prosperity of the State. Our principal taxes on necessaries are on salt, leather, soap, and candles, which produce on the

the annual average near 200,000*l.* each; they are all to a certain degree detrimental to the industrious poor, and raise the wages of labour; but they have a gradual operation which much softens their tendency, and they are not hitherto found to cramp the maintenance and support of the lower class, so as to diminish the useful population of the country.

We should not derive much advantage from an enquiry into the taxation of other States, because regulations which are wise in one country, may be quite inapplicable to another; yet some comparative satisfaction may result to an Englishman, from recollecting the duties in Holland on the consumption of bread, fish, and fruit, &c.; the excises upon butchers meat, and the chief necessaries of life, in many of the Italian States; the Spanish *alcavala* of six per cent. upon every sale of any property moveable or immoveable; the French capitation, their corvees, Farmers General, depreciations of coin, taxations of the public debt, and above all the personal taille, which construes every shew of improvement into a proof of wealth, and taxes it accordingly.

In the result, France raises less than fifteen millions sterling, and with much distress and difficulty, upon three times the number of inhabitants from which England raises above ten millions; and yet this island, thank God, does  
not,

not, under all her burdens, yet exhibit any one symptom of internal decay: the universal luxury of her inhabitants, though a thesis for moral censure, is a decisive proof of her opulence.— Her Excise and Customs \* have risen in the present year, even beyond their usual level, and by shewing the extent of home-consumption, imply an increasing produce, and quick circulation; every known criterion, and every external appearance, concur in proving the quantity of money within the country to be unusually great.

The next consideration is, how to derive from such appearances the solid assistance which our emergencies require; and this task, after a few cursory remarks, I shall cheerfully leave to those who have financial ability, and will

* The gross produce of the Excise				
for the year 1778, ending 5th July,		£.	s.	d.
amounted to	— — —	5,754,076	0	1
Ditto for 1779,	— — —	5,869,081	18	7

The gross receipt of the Customs				
for the whole year 1777, amounted				
to	— — —	3,293,200	0	0
Ditto for 1778,	— — —	3,538,040	0	•

The net payments of Customs into				
the Exchequer for Lady-Day, Mid-				
summer, and Michaelmas 1778, a-				
mounted to	— — —	1,656,513	8	4½
Ditto for 1779,	— — —	1,818,768	11	11¼
			employ	

employ it on the resources and spirit of the nation.

It is a paradox without ingenuity, an extravagance without fancy, to state that burdens create powers, and that this country is become proportionably affluent by the increase of her incumbrances; but it is a plain truth, that though the incumbrances are great, her trade and commerce are still flourishing. It has, in former times, been made an argument for adding to the public burdens, that their bulk has not yet overwhelmed us: at present we want no argument beyond the iron one of necessity. We have no choice:—great and vigorous exertions both of finance and force are become essential to the maintenance of our rank among nations, our credit, and our commerce.

Some respectable individuals have proposed, on the present emergency, to suspend the practice of borrowing, and to call upon every subject in the kingdom, for a direct aid equal to the public wants; that aid to be proportioned either to real capital, or to income.—It is impossible not to treat with the utmost deference and regard, any proposal originating in that spirit of public virtue, which ought to guide the whole country through the storm in which she is struggling. Yet it may be doubted whether such an idea would be in any degree practicable, and if it were, whether it would be expedient.

Supposing the general income of the kingdom to be 100 millions, or the total capital to be 1000 millions (which however are points at best very conjectural), it is indisputably clear, that  $7 \frac{1}{2}$  *per cent.* collected on the one, or  $\frac{3}{4}$  *per cent.* collected on the other, must produce 7 millions and a half, which if raised in sterling money within the year, might well be applied towards the support of the war.

The different adopters of these ways and means, do not quite agree whether they would draw for this supply on the capital of the kingdom, or on the revenue; but they concur, and with an ability which indeed warms the imaginations, and expands the hearts of their readers, in stating what however amounts to no more than this, that there is a certain quantum of property within the island, a certain proportion of which amounts to a certain sum, which will be a very convenient assistance, if Parliament can contrive to get it.

So far, however, as the practicability is in question, the corner-stone of the whole expectation is to be laid in the airy regions of sentiment, and in that unanimous concurrence, generosity, and public zeal, of eight millions of people, which is to lead them with one heart, and one hand, to state and to give

accurately and scrupulously their respective proportions.

There is, indeed, a precedent of such exertions in Holland, where 2 *per cent.* was supposed to be faithfully paid by voluntary contribution; but the exigency was of the most urgent kind, as it operated upon a people collected within a small territory, and engaged in a general insurrection. At Hamburgh also, it is a frequent practice to obtain a conscientious payment of  $\frac{1}{4}$  *per cent.* on the whole property of the inhabitants, and it is delivered into a public coffer, without declaration of the amount of each contribution; but this is a very inconsiderable impost, levied too within a single city, and not more remarkable than a Bristol subscription to any object of popular regard.

It is not likely that any great difficulty would arise here from the sum being too large for our proportion of circulating cash. If it were possible to infuse into every breast a *quantum sufficit* of public enthusiasm, there can be little doubt that seven millions and a half extraordinary might be drawn together in this way, as practicably as by a loan on new taxes.—We know that there is within the kingdom above twenty millions sterling of gold currency; for above sixteen millions of guineas actually appeared.

peared upon the salutary operation of reforming the gold coin ; an operation which cannot be mentioned, without a wish to see it extended to our silver coinage, both for the benefit of trade, and for the prevention of a capital crime which is become very frequent !

The truth is, that a contribution, which in order to be effective must be so general as to extend even to the daily scrapings of halfpence from the hands of peasants, cannot be the voluntary measure of an extensive empire.—We know that opulent and zealous subjects can exclude the rays of the sun from their houses, in order to shut out a window-tax ; we see wearied coach-horses strained twenty miles extraordinary, to save two-pence per mile on post-horses ; and yet we are to expect seven millions sterling, as a voluntary benevolence ! Disinterested enthusiasm is a rare and short-lived plant, and not of a rampant growth : It is of the sensitive kind too, and shrinks when touched by the hand of a tax-gatherer. If the proposed contribution were secret, it would fall hard on the best and warmest-hearted subjects of the state, but would bring more blanks than a guinea lottery from individuals of another description. If it were open, it would be oppressive and odious ; nor would the spirit of



transactions of a mercantile country bear an universal publication of every man's circumstances;—and farther, as the declarations of personal property would in general be much contracted within their real value, the difference would fall on land-owners and men having ostensible possessions.

Happily, however, this idea is not practicable, for it certainly would not be expedient. Few people could make the requisite exertion, without encroaching more or less on their capital: and this general effect would operate as a fatal blow to our manufactures and agriculture, which not only raise and distribute a competent portion of maintenance to every part of the nation, but furnish the fund to all the supplies of the year.—The superior ranks in the State would reduce their domestic establishments, the lower classes would curtail their expences, the several venders of superfluities would suffer, the farmers markets would be lessened, the general decay of trade would occasion a decrease of the public revenue, and the deficiency must either fall on the sinking fund, or be made up by fresh taxes. And though a proportion of the money voluntarily contributed, and thus diverted from taxed objects of expence, would in a course of time

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return

return to circulation, and be again productive to the State, the present object would not be attained.

In 1720, Mr. A. Hutchinson stated in the House of Commons, and afterwards published in his Treatises, a scheme for the payment of the public debts. He proposed that every individual should charge himself with his proportionable share of those debts, and contribute that share for the entire discharge of all our funds and public mortgages. The idea was magnificent, and filled the mind; but every man who reasoned upon it agreed, that such a scheme (supposing it practicable) would fall partially and heavily on visible possessions of lands and houses, and that every other species of property capable of concealment would be concealed.

It might possibly become expedient to collect from individuals as much as they would give. An extremity too might arrive, in which, under a choice of necessary evils, it might become the best alternative to raise supplies upon the ordinary unappropriated revenue, or upon the produce of the sinking fund, which together would afford an interest equal to about one hundred and thirty millions sterling.

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But I trust again and again, that the times are very far from wanting such assistance and such aids.

*\*There is every reason to hope, that under the four considerations of new taxes, increase of particular subsisting taxes, improvements in the present modes of collecting, and appropriations of public claims, possessions, and contingencies, there are ample, easy, and safe resources for many years :*

1. Under the head of luxuries there remain many objects to assist revenue, and new ones daily arise to exercise the talents of a financier. It is an old-fashioned witticism, that of all mines of public revenue vanity is the most inexhaustible, and the easiest to be worked.

“ To catch the manners living as they rise,” is an useful art in taxation ; it must be exercised, however, with gentleness ; nor must it bear hard upon objects, which exist rather in the caprice than in the convenience of the consumer, and which, from their intrinsic value, cannot bear any considerable impost. In 1767, 1,500,000 *l.* was borrowed on a duty upon ladies chip hats ; the duty was made larger in proportion to the value, that it might be productive ; the consequence was, that chip hats were discontinued, and the tax produced nothing.

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The articles of luxury, which are not of mere vanity, but of general utility, are extremely numerous in a rich and populous country like this. And though it must be confessed that this field of taxation, which is highly productive in its nature, has been reaped with great industry, there are several good gleanings still to be collected from it. A tax on all saddle-horses might, perhaps, be laid and levied much in the same manner as the late tax upon servants: such a tax would certainly be productive; and if it should operate in any degree as a discouragement to that species of expence, it would not be unfavourable to agriculture; the retrenching of individuals in this article would operate in favour of others more beneficial to the revenue; and the importation of foreign oats, which is at present considerable, would be reduced. A moderate tax, however, would not occasion any check or revulsion in the present system of expence; and if such a tax were extended to the coach and chaise horses of private persons, it would give some little collateral support to the present tax on post-horses. The last-mentioned tax being at  $33\frac{1}{3}$  per cent. is thought by some too high, and to have given a sudden check to that mode of expence. This may be so in some degree; but we must also take into  
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the account the disposition which men feel to evade the operation of every new tax ; and also the present circumstance of the camps, which prevent much of the general intercourse at other times going forwards through the kingdom ; and it is more severely felt by the innkeepers, because they are, at the same time, exposed to great losses and hardships from the frequent marchings and quarterings of troops for the public service.—There can be little doubt but that the posting business will gradually recover its tone. In the mean time this tax, though it may in some degree lower the produce of the wheel duty, and indirectly other minuter taxes, is very productive ; and it will be much improved whenever the door is closed against some frauds, to which the present mode of collection is open, and which have also crept in through the exemptions given by the act of parliament.

Printed pamphlets and hand bills are not unfair nor unpromising objects for a small stamp-tax. Nor would learning suffer, or its productions be discouraged, if books were moderately taxed. Bills of entrance, clearances, cockets, and other formal papers used in commercial transactions, are certainly numerous enough to make a small stamp-duty very productive ; these, however, are objects which  
require

require caution and previous enquiry. A new stamp-duty on certificates to be given to all persons qualifying themselves for lucrative offices and employments, might be laid with much less scruple.

Public places of amusement are with some a favourite object for a slight impost. But this measure would, perhaps, be grating to the feelings of the people, beyond other more productive taxes, and, if it operated as a discouragement to places of public amusement, would collaterally affect other sources of revenue.

The *vicefima hæreditatum* of the Romans has long been adopted by the Dutch, in regard to all collateral successions of property; and some of the Dutch regulations might be borrowed with advantage, if any institution of the same kind were attempted here. Many successive English Ministers have had it in contemplation, but have always found it liable to difficulty, and open to much evasion, from the nature of British property both real and personal, and from the various established modes of trusts and transfers. Such a tax, if established, would in many cases be paid with perfect cheerfulness to a considerable amount, and in others would contribute towards drawing something to the revenue from long minorities,

rities, where there is much property hoarding and increasing under the protection of the public, without paying any proportion towards the public expence.

2. The augmentation of subsisting taxes is a most useful expedient, wherever the commodity to be taxed will bear the additional impost; because there is a probable foreknowledge of the produce, and little expence in the collection. It has hitherto been found in most instances, that our general consumption has gained ground under the pressure of increased taxes; but there is a point beyond which particular duties cannot advance, without the hazard of a fall, from which they may never rise again. Indigo was a principal product of Jamaica, and flourished much under the old duties; but when the legislature imposed three shillings and sixpence *per* pound on it, the planters dropped the cultivation entirely; and though the Parliament repealed the tax, the people were either unable or unwilling to recover the manufacture, which in 1747 revived in the Carolinas, and was supported by a British bounty.

There is no doubt that stamp-duties might be increased with advantage in many cases, according to the value of the sums or property  
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to be secured or transferred. A small duty of registration might also be required on the transfer of some particular species of property; such a duty, however, would fall frequently upon the seller, under such circumstances as to operate in aggravation of distress. A considerable stamp-duty on the probates of wills, on letters of administration, and on the copies of all wills, was granted by an act of the last session; but the proving of wills was not at the same time sufficiently enforced.

The entire abolition of franks would undoubtedly be attended with an additional revenue, which might moderately be estimated at 80,000 *l.* a year; many awkward and expensive arrangements must however be substituted in respect to correspondence on parliamentary and official businesses. Public expediency may in due time require such a measure; it would, however, be matter of some regret to see Parliament deprived of an old, and not unreasonable distinction.

Some respectable writers have proposed as a good measure to equalize the land-tax. I may possibly be misled by a partiality towards our own part of England; but I conceive such an idea to be replete with objections. It is always dangerous to change the established



course of a very productive tax: It would in this instance be unjust, because the proprietors of low rated estates have, in many instances, purchased them upon the faith of a settled and permanent tax:—It would be inexpedient, because it would operate as a punishment on late improvements, and would ruin many landlords now in a course of beneficial cultivation. It has hitherto been deemed the best feature of our land-tax, that it is not subject to variations. It may be true that the rent of lands alone amounts to twenty millions sterling; and that the land-tax, taken at one-fifth not only of all the land rents, but of all house rents, and of the interest of all capital stock, produces a sum equal to one-tenth only of twenty millions: but a dry deduction of arithmetic is no just argument for a forcible and violent operation of revenue. The more plausible arrangement of levelling the whole present duty to two shillings, in order to collect it upon a new survey and equal valuation, is exposed to all the same objections. It might, however, be less unfair, if a fifth shilling were ever to be granted, to take that addition upon a new valuation.

It is the opinion of some credible and well informed men, that the bounties paid on corn

operate little with the farmer, either directly or indirectly, as an encouragement to that branch of agriculture; that they accrue to the benefit chiefly of artful factors, are sometimes fraudulently managed and received upon corn, which is actually brought back to the kingdom sometimes even without quitting our coasts; and that, admitting those bounties to have hitherto had the salutary effect ascribed to them (which however is disputable), they are at present a source of much unavailing expence to the kingdom. I understand the subject too imperfectly to say more than that, in fact, the expence sometimes exceeds 300,000*l.* a year, and that the annual saving of one-half of that sum, would be equal to the interest of a loan of five millions.

There are other existing bounties which may deserve an enquiry; and it is a common suspicion too, that many frauds have crept into the whole business of drawbacks, as well by the re-exportation of foreign goods, which are afterwards relanded for home consumption, as by favourable certificates on manufactured materials, and by other modes, to the disadvantage of fair trade, and to the great detriment of the revenue.

3. Nor is there any doubt that the income of the public might be greatly increased (and commerce at the same time be benefited) by improvements in the present modes of collecting.

In articles which must remain subject to a Custom-house duty, much improvement may be made by a liquidation of the duties, and a revival of the book of rates.—New taxes having been added and superadded to the old from time to time, it is become a matter of science to know, and an occupation of great dexterity to compute them. For example, a pound of nutmegs is charged with nine different duties, *1s. 8d.*  $\frac{3}{20}$   $\frac{1}{20}$   $\frac{4}{20}$   $\frac{1}{20}$ , &c. &c. &c. This method, or rather want of method, is embarrassing to commerce; for it takes up time, which is valuable to the merchant, and must be paid for; it creates an additional expence in management, and it makes the attendants about the Custom-house the agents of the importers; which circumstance is either burdensome to the merchant, or has a manifest bad tendency to the revenue. The duty, likewise, by these small fractional additions, has, at last, in many instances, been raised too high, and the article is then either smuggled or debased. By a liquidation of duties, the expence of collection might

might be much diminished; and the payment being made easier, and consequently less chargeable to the merchant, his temptations to clandestine trade would be lessened, and the revenue would gain.

How far it might be expedient to convert the liquidated duties into duties *ad valorem*, may be a matter of some doubt, and would well deserve a previous enquiry and consideration. The prevalent system of fixed duties has the important merit of long acquiescence and experience in its favour. Nor would it be easy to obviate the frauds used in fixing the value, though improvement might certainly be made in that respect, if a considerable part of the Customs were so charged. At present, the duties *ad valorem* are mostly very high, and intended not to raise money, but to prevent the importation.

The advantage of laying different taxes on a commodity, through the several stages of its progress towards the consumer, in preference to collecting the whole upon one of the stages, consists in dividing the temptation to fraud through the different individuals: but this idea has been thought by some to be carried too far. It is supposed, for example, that a considerable advantage would result both to the revenue and  
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to consumers, if the different taxes upon beer were all laid on the malt, *it being much easier to defraud the revenue in a brewery than in a malt-house*; and such a duty would reach private breweries, which at present have a partial advantage. The objection, that this plan would lay too great a load upon the maltster, is in some degree weakened, by observing that the whole is at present paid, with all farther additions, by the brewer. In other instances, it is thought that the revenue suffers by the duty being paid in the first stage. Sugar, for example, is charged with a duty on importation; the West India merchant pays that duty; the sugar-refiner repays him with interest and commission; the grocer repays the refiner in like manner, and is repaid by the consumer.

A charge of interest and commission upon the sum advanced for the duty, certainly arises upon a taxed commodity every time that it is sold before its consumption; and this consideration, added to the time and expence of transacting business at the Custom-house, has led some to suppose, that, in all articles which do not pass directly from the importer to the consumer, the sum added to the price, on account of the duty, may be computed at one-third above the duty. This is one reason why excises  
are

are more productive than Customs, and *preferable in a mere question of revenue.*

It certainly appears too, from experience, that the Excise laws confound the operations of the smugglers much more than those of the Customs, and that the nearer the latter, without vexation to the people, can be made to approximate to the former, the more productive they will be. There are many articles of great and valuable consumption, where the goods might be warehoused and pass by permit. It is evident too, that the Excise laws might be applied to the duty on wine, without any danger to popular liberties, and with great benefit to the general health. Tea is so portable and so valuable an article, that it is the favourite object of smugglers, by which the revenue is defrauded to a great amount; and large sums, for this clandestine trade, are sent annually out of the kingdom into the continent. It has been estimated, that above eight millions of pounds of adulterated, unwholesome, and smuggled tea, are annually consumed within Great Britain. It is this article too which bears the expence of many smuggling vessels, and supports them in bringing other objects of clandestine trade. If it were practicable to subject tea to a general excise, the

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duty

duty might, perhaps, be lowered, so as to leave this commodity at two-thirds of the present price to the consumers, and yet to raise a much larger duty to the State. In Holland, a tax is levied on each person for a license to drink tea. This, on individuals, would amount to a capitation; upon families, it would be a mere house-tax; and in either case, would lose the advantage of a tax on consumable commodities, which should operate according to the voluntary consumption.

The expence of levying the Customs, in the salary of officers, and other incidents, amounts to ten *per cent.* that of the Excise to about five and a half *per cent.*

Duties at first are frequently imposed as experiments, and there is great excuse for the makers of the several revenue laws, however confused and ill contrived they may appear. But after so many years experience gained, it is surprising that no person has had the public spirit to form a plan for making the collection of the revenue more simple, and of course more productive. Many individuals have knowledge enough in the management, mysteries, and intricacies of trade, to reduce such a reform to practice; and the respectable merchants of England would zealously assist.—It is an unfortunate,

fortunate, but generally received opinion, that ~~great~~ schemes of reformation must have quiet times to give them birth and effect. The reverse of this is perhaps the truth; for when affairs go smoothly on, idleness and self-indulgence are generally an over-match for public spirit; and men are not easily prevailed upon to quit the beaten road. But times of difficulty naturally and forcibly call forth activity and exertions.

4. In the appropriation of public claims, possessions, and contingencies, there are various great resources accruing to the public.

Some individuals have built high expectations on the crown lands; others have taken possession of all the public tolls and turnpikes; and others again have looked into the poor-houses for a large supply of revenue. Without reprobating, or even disputing the notions of respectable men, whose spirit and abilities are exemplary, and useful to the public, I am content to call your Lordship's attention to matters more obvious.

In 1781, nineteen millions sterling will fall from an interest of 4 *per cent.* to 3 *per cent.* In 1782, 4 millions and  $\frac{1}{2}$  will fall from  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 *per cent.*; and the saving in these instances alone will furnish a fund for the interest of seven



millions. There are several accessions also annually accruing to the public from the expiration of life annuities.

But the East-India Company alone present great and ample resources. In their approaching application for a renewal of their charter, there can be no doubt that the fostering attention and tenderness which was shewn to them on a late occasion, will be continued to an establishment, from which this empire has derived, and continues to derive so large a branch of its commerce and revenue. On the other hand, it is as little to be doubted that the Company will be sensible of the constitutional right (and perhaps the equity) of the claim to their territorial acquisitions; and that, in the arrangement of these great considerations, they will, in return for continuing their fortunate monopoly, be able not only to furnish a considerable assistance to this country in money, but an ample income from their acquisitions, to be employed as a farther and permanent resource.

Here I shall close this subject, and if in the candid consideration of our difficulties and resources, I have been fortunate enough to impart any share of that confidence which has grown upon me through the whole progress of this

this enquiry, or to invite better reasonings to a similar effect, I shall feel satisfied with the sacrifice of a leisure in other respects of little consequence.



*Sic nos in luce timemus  
Interdum, nibilo quæ sunt metuenda magis, quam  
Quæ pueri in tenebris pavitant, finguntque futura.  
Hunc igitur terrorem animi, tenebrasque necesse est,  
Non radii solis, nec lucida tela diei  
Discussant, sed Naturæ species, ratioque.*

LUCRET. 6.

Greenwich, Nov. 4, 1779.

UPON closing the preceding Letters, I have had leisure to advert to the printed accounts of some occurrences which have lately engaged the public attention ; and I should think that I had very imperfectly executed my first proposition, of stating to your Lordship “ the sincere sentiments of a plain mind upon “ things as they are,” if I were to keep back the first and genuine ideas which occur to me respecting the recent applications of the Irish Parliament for a free trade. I proceed, however, in this new task, more destitute of competent information, if possible, than your Lordship has thus far found me ; but my pen will at least be guided by a similar anxiety to promote candid recollection, and fair enquiry.

And here too we must divest ourselves of all prejudices contracted from the popular altercations of the day ; we must endeavour to enter upon the subject before us with as much benevolence, and as little partiality, as may be compatible with the just interests of the society to which we belong.—The wish, indeed, of all good and prudent men, both in Great Britain  
and

and in Ireland, must be, to shun with abhorrence all the contagious delirium incident to national questions, and to promote only that constitutional warmth, which may act kindly, and with an invigorating influence, in both kingdoms.

It is not the strict policy of a former century, or the accidental distress of the present hour ; it is not the supposed procrastination of a reasonable hope, or the harsh tone of a precipitate demand ; it is not an imaginary neglect on the one hand, or an urgent eagerness on the other, which should call forth between two countries connected together by the ties of sovereignty, language, law, blood, interests, and situation, any unbecoming expression, or any ungenerous sentiment.—A kind and manly confidence in the equity and wisdom of Great Britain should regulate the expectations of Ireland ; a due persuasion that Ireland is incapable of unworthy motives, or unreasonable wishes, should preside over the deliberations of Great Britain.—Hasty inferences, and decisive assertions, are fit only for disputants who do not seek fair discussion, and cannot or will not understand each other : —The respective interests of Great Britain and Ireland should be considered in a very different tone and temper ; without passion, but with earnestness ; without precipitation, but with all practicable

practicable dispatch. The distress of Ireland (by whatever circumstances occasioned) exists and operates; Great Britain cannot hesitate to give relief; the principal wing of her buildings is in danger; it is for the safety and strength of the great center-edifice, that every part should be diligently examined, and sufficiently repaired.

It is an indisputable and undisputed fact, that there has prevailed through the times in which we live, a voluntary and warm-hearted anxiety in this country; to express her sense of the affectionate conduct of Ireland. It would be superfluous to refer your Lordship to the various acts of parliament, made in this disposition, during the last five years; they were numerous, but have not had the beneficial effects which were meant:—

*Nam neque chorda sonum reddit, quem vult manus  
et mens,*

*Poscentique gravem persæpe remittit acutum.*

The growing distresses of Ireland have overpowered the endeavours of Great Britain to avert them; and we are now told that “nothing short of a free trade” can give relief!

It was wisdom in the Irish Parliament, to chuse an undefined expression upon a subject so complicated and extensive in all its connections

and consequences. The whole consideration is now opened to both kingdoms, and it is the interest of both to come to an early, kind, and efficient conclusion.

It is possible that there may be many individuals in both kingdoms, who know as little of this subject as I do; and I freely own that the doubts and difficulties which the first view of it suggests to my mind, are such as preclude all farther reasonings without fuller information. The questions to be asked are indeed numerous, nice, and intricate. Theoretical deductions will not assist us; trading establishments, regulations of commerce, and the whole system of revenue, are involved in the proposition. 'A principal spring or wheel of a complicated clock-work may be deranged; but to turn the key round upon the instant with violence, would tend only to demolish all the component parts; if we value the machine, we should previously examine it.—When I state my reasonings to your Lordship, I shall be better understood.

I do not wish to carry back your attention to the days of Prince Fitz-Murchard or Earl Strongbow. It would give me little concern if the histories left by Giraldus Cambrensis, Hoveden, and even Mathew Paris, had been buried with the historians;—nor do I feel

anxious to bring to light the ancient statutes and ordinances of Henry the Third, Edward the First, and other early reigns, supposed to be made for the purpose of binding Ireland. The antiquated discussions upon the fact of conquest; at what particular point the rights of the conqueror are restricted by the laws of nature and reason; whether the principle of subjugation can extend to any exorbitancy of power; and whether implied acquiescence constitutes a positive acceptance; are questions little calculated at any period of our history to promote any good purpose to either kingdom.

It is a political truth more material to be known, that happiness and strength should be extended through the constituent parts of an empire, as far as wise and beneficent laws can operate to that effect. It would next be easy to shew, that public happiness and strength are diffused in proportion to the plenty and convenience with which not only the natural wants of a people are supplied, but such adventitious ones as are superinduced by universal habit and industry: when this end is not attained to a certain degree, an empire may indeed exist, and may increase in numbers, but it will grow, like an unwieldy body, liable to dangerous and acute humours.



Whatever may have been the system of government adopted or accepted by Ireland, the recent and most interesting fact is, that she now complains of some distresses which she conceives to result from that system. Those distresses are possibly no more than may have resulted from temporary causes ;—from the late rebellion within the colonies, or from the calamities incident to war ; but we know perfectly, that the complaint is founded in real sufferings. The first inference which would arise from this fact in any mind reasoning kindly towards a part of the empire, and discreetly in respect to the whole, is, that the Irish, as fellow-subjects, are entitled to every relief compatible with the general interests. Still, however, we decide without precision, and must draw the circumstances of the two countries to a nearer comparison, if we mean to form any useful conclusion.

The most obvious remark which presents itself is, that Ireland, possessing, on a smaller scale, nearly all the natural advantages of Great Britain, and having, besides, in point of commerce, some others peculiar to her situation towards the prevailing winds, has yet in all ages been comparatively poor and distressed.

The reasons why this phænomenon has so long existed, and why Ireland has not hitherto  
availed

availed herself of the blessings which nature seems to hold forth with a liberal hand, are variously assigned; and as they have generally received some colour from popular and occasional appearances, there is cause to suspect that they do not reach the origin of the evil.

I have seen it somewhere remarked, that the madness of Ajax, who took a flock of sheep for his enemies, would be the wisdom of Ireland; and that a principal cause of the poverty of the latter was the system of her landlords, who, in defiance of the practice and prudence of all other nations, had preferred pasturage to tillage, and, by restraining the industry of the tenants, had reduced numberless families to the alternative of either leaving the kingdom or strolling about in beggary. Sir William Temple attributed the poverty and distress of Ireland to her plenty and superabundance. In another part of his works he takes notice, that the Dutch had turned over to the Danes the patriarchal trade of cow-keeping, for supplying them with lean cattle, and to the Polanders that of plowmen, for growing corn for their use, in order to reserve their own lands and their own people for better and more useful employments. Such, in fact, may be the situation of the nations alluded to, but perhaps it is less the work of policy than of local cir-

*cumstances.* At the same time, if we even should admit that a country which addict<sup>s</sup> itself chiefly to grazing, or even to grazing and agriculture, will generally be poor, we do not describe the case of Ireland: it has not been the system of the Irish merely to support herdsmen and shepherds by grazing, nor to raise cattle to be sent in flocks to distant countries; but they employ many useful citizens in a variety of manufactures, to which the simple occupations first alluded to furnish only the materials. It is still, however, to be remembered, that the mere necessaries of life are raised by the labour of a very small proportion of a people; artificial wants and habitual luxuries must be introduced, to occupy those in manufactures who are not engaged in agriculture, and to promote a general industry, interchange, and circulation through the state.

Dean Swift, who ascribed the poverty of his country to a multiplicity of causes, and amongst others, to a radical error in the whole system of Irish leases, to the avarice of landlords in drawing severe rents, and to the undue encouragement of grazing, admitted also that there was a want of an industrious disposition among the people; but he attributed that want to the restraints laid upon their commerce, and to the discouragement of manufactures, which had  
made

made them mere hewers of wood, and drawers of water, to their neighbours. Under this impression, he was wont to quote a verse from the Book of Exodus :—“ Ye are idle, ye are idle, “ cried Pharaoh unto the children of Israel ; go “ therefore now and work ; for there shall no “ straw be given you, yet shall ye deliver the “ tale of bricks.”

It is a similar reasoning which has produced the application now before us. And if in our own days we were to state to an Irish gentleman the long continued poverty and idleness which have prevailed over so large a proportion of his countrymen, he would probably answer,

“ All this may be true ; but the monopolizing spirit of our Sister Kingdom is the “ cause of it. That spirit exercising itself “ upon Ireland in a very early state of her civilization, nipped her disposition to industry, “ and indeed made it impossible for her to become industrious. In the very infancy of “ our country, and whilst we were contenting “ ourselves with the exportations and sale of “ our cattle, you made an act (*b*) to prohibit “ those exportations. We next gave our attention to the increase of our sheep, in order

(*b*) 3 Eliz. cap. 3.

“ to export wool; but you forthwith (c) pro-  
 “ hibited the exportation of wool, and made it  
 “ subject to forfeiture. We then endeavoured  
 “ to employ and support ourselves by salting  
 “ provisions for sale; but you immediately (d)  
 “ refused them admittance into England, in  
 “ order to increase the rents of your lands,  
 “ though you thereby increased the wages of  
 “ your labourers. We next began a woollen  
 “ manufacture; but it was no sooner established  
 “ than destroyed; for you prohibited (e) the  
 “ exportation of manufactured woollens to any  
 “ other place than England and Wales: and  
 “ this prohibition alone is reported to have  
 “ forced 20,000 manufacturers out of the  
 “ kingdom.

“ The Navigation Act (f) had unwittingly  
 “ but kindly permitted all commodities to be  
 “ imported into Ireland, upon the same terms  
 “ as into England: but by an act (g) passed  
 “ three years afterwards, the exportation of  
 “ any goods from Ireland into any of the Plan-  
 “ tations was prohibited: and as if that had  
 “ not sufficiently crippled the benefits given  
 “ by the Navigation Act, we were soon (b) after-

(c) 13 and 14 Car. II. c. 18. (d) 18 Car. II. cap. 2.

(e) 10 and 11 William III. cap. 10.

(f) 12 Car. II. cap. 18. (g) 15 Car. II. cap. 7.

(b) 2 Car. II. cap. 26.

wards forbid to import any of the enumerated commodities from the Plantations into Ireland. This restriction too was much enforced by subsequent acts, and the list of enumerated goods was much increased.—I say nothing of your regulations respecting glass, hops, sail-cloth, &c. and other inferior barriers and obstructions to our commerce: we subsisted under all this, and under a drain also, which has gradually increased upon us, by remittances to our own absentees, English mortgagees, government annuitants, and other extra-commercial purposes, to the amount of half a million sterling annually. And though we retained no trade but in linen and provisions, the latter has been under a three years prohibition, during which period we lost the principal market for our own beef, though three-fourths of our people were graziers. Many of us indeed carried on a clandestine trade, and it was essential to our support; but that too has been lately checked, first by the revolt of the Colonies, and now by the war with France and Spain.

“ Our annual remittances and debts to  
 “ Great Britain now increase with our dis-  
 “ tresses; our subscriptions for loans have  
 “ been lately filled from Great Britain; our  
 S . “ estates,

“ estates, when sold, are purchased by Eng-  
 “ lishmen; our leases, when they expire, are  
 “ raised by absentees; the drain is become  
 “ greater than all our means can supply; our  
 “ manufacturers find little demand for their  
 “ work, the farmers sell their produce with  
 “ difficulty; our land rents indeed are esti-  
 “ mated at near three millions sterling, but our  
 “ landholders will soon be obliged to reduce  
 “ them. We allow that several of your re-  
 “ strictions upon us have lately been much  
 “ softened or modified, but the want of an  
 “ annual profit in our intercourse with Great  
 “ Britain equal to our remittances still pre-  
 “ vails, and is every hour more felt. By the  
 “ unfortunate situation of the Colonies, we  
 “ have lost even our old refuge in emigrations.  
 “ —After having for many years taken British  
 “ manufactures, to the annual amount of per-  
 “ haps two millions sterling, we are for the  
 “ present reduced to non-importation agree-  
 “ ments, as a measure, not of expediency, but  
 “ of necessity. It would have suited the  
 “ generosity of our feelings, and the affec-  
 “ tion which we bear towards you, to have  
 “ made our representations in better and  
 “ more peaceable times; but you see that  
 “ our circumstances are urgent, and that your  
 “ recent indulgencies are insufficient. We  
 “ desire

“ desire therefore a free trade, otherwise our  
 “ distresses must, if possible, increase, and the  
 “ conveniency of our ports will continue of  
 “ no more use to us, than a beautiful prospect  
 “ to a man shut up in a dungeon.”

There is nothing in the imaginary detail here offered to your Lordship, which has not been stated to you in better words, as often as you have had occasion to converse with friends who wish warmly towards Ireland, and are moderately acquainted with the principal features in her situation; and as every complaint of human hardship is entitled either to a refutation, or to some redress, we are next to consider what answer might be given to the allegations now before us.

Believing, as I do, that in these days of general science and liberal disquisition, the respectable and leading men in this kingdom (of which description there is a large proportion), are unlikely to inclose themselves within the rusty and rugged armour of Monopoly, I think it possible that their first impressions might be to the following effect:

“ Many of the regulations here complained  
 “ of relate to England’s internal commerce,  
 “ and may be matters of regret to Ireland,  
 “ but cannot afford any just cause of com-  
 “ plaint:—other circumstances may be admit-



“ ted, to the extent stated ; but we should hesi-  
 “ tate before we admit the causes to which  
 “ they are ascribed : we might examine, for  
 “ instance, merely as a question of commerce,  
 “ whether before and during the late embargo  
 “ on the usual exports of provisions to France  
 “ and Spain in time of peace, more extensive,  
 “ safe, and profitable markets were not opened  
 “ and encouraged ; by which the price of the  
 “ commodity, and freight, and the quantity  
 “ of specie were increased.—The emigrations  
 “ too which are alluded to, as well as some  
 “ other effects of national distress, were occa-  
 “ sioned, perhaps, by the increase and injudi-  
 “ cious modes of land-rents, which were  
 “ thought grievous sixty years ago, and have  
 “ been generally advanced near one-third  
 “ since.—With respect to the larger question,  
 “ we will neither criminate nor justify the  
 “ system of our ancestors. The fact is, that,  
 “ aided by their general system and progressive  
 “ industry, the commerce of Great Britain has  
 “ flourished, and continues to flourish. We  
 “ are sorry that her Sister Kingdom has not  
 “ kept pace with her. That she has not done  
 “ so, is perhaps owing chiefly to the frequent  
 “ interference of civil distractions, and to  
 “ other causes so forcibly described by Dean  
 “ Swift, as bearing hard on the industry of

“ the middle and lower classes of the people,  
 “ We have already given proofs of our con-  
 “ viction, that our interests are in a great de-  
 “ gree mutual. We wish that Ireland may be  
 “ assisted, but we desire, that before proceed-  
 “ ings are adopted to reverse all the system pur-  
 “ sued by wise statesmen during two centuries,  
 “ due information may be obtained, and due  
 “ discretion exercised. In the general anxiety  
 “ to assist Ireland, it must appear to be as little  
 “ her interest as ours, to give any sudden shock  
 “ or precipitate revulsion to the course of  
 “ British trade, commerce, and revenue. Let  
 “ the legislatures of the two countries act with  
 “ dispatch, but let that dispatch be guided by  
 “ a previous and competent knowledge of all  
 “ the operative and interesting circumstances!

“ It is not possible, in the nature of com-  
 “ merce, to decide, without a full investiga-  
 “ tion of the subject, what can be meant, or  
 “ ought to be meant, by a free trade; and till  
 “ the proposition has been discussed and ascer-  
 “ tained, between well informed and well in-  
 “ tentioned men of the respective countries, it  
 “ must vary in every point of view that we can  
 “ place it.

“ 1. Do the people of Ireland understand,  
 “ by what they ask, the power of exporting  
 “ their own produce to any foreign country,  
 “ wherever

“ wherever they can find the best market, except only the countries which may at any time be at war with their Sovereign ?

“ 2. Do they imply the power of drawing such goods and consumable commodities as they may want, from any country where they may best purchase them ?

“ 3. Do they wish to be allowed a commerce to North America, the West Indies, and Africa, free from the restraints to which it was left subject when the 18th of his present Majesty extended their power of exportation ?

“ 4. Do they mean to ask a free trade to Great Britain, their manufactures and produce, when imported into this country, being subject to no other duties than the like manufactures and produce of our own ?

“ 5. Do they mean a repeal of particular restrictions, which the relative circumstances of the two countries may, in their opinion, no longer make requisite ?

“ Under all or any of these propositions, there are many points of nice and difficult consideration. What regulations or burdens are meant to be proposed, analogous to what now prevail, in regard to the manufactures, imports, and exports of Great Britain ? What prohibitions respecting the  
“ export

“ export of certain raw materials? What ar-  
 “ rangements in respect to our distant posses-  
 “ sions and factories? Other subjects of dis-  
 “ cussion will arise, and some upon nice and  
 “ intricate points of commerce, involved as it  
 “ happens to be, in considerations of revenue,  
 “ and in the maintenance of the public ex-  
 “ pence. We do not know, that emulation  
 “ among manufacturers and merchants is mis-  
 “ chievous either to them or to the state: We  
 “ do not know that the enterprising industry  
 “ and increasing wealth of Lancashire have  
 “ tended to obstruct, instead of promoting  
 “ those of Yorkshire: We do not know that  
 “ the flourishing of Glasgow in her commerce,  
 “ is any detriment either to Liverpool or  
 “ Bristol: We do not know that the prosperity  
 “ of the staple manufacture of Ireland has  
 “ lessened the advantages of a similar manu-  
 “ facture in Scotland. We admit at least that  
 “ such competitions furnish employment, pro-  
 “ duce riches, and encourage population for  
 “ the general happiness and strength of the  
 “ empire; and we trust that there will be de-  
 “ mand and trade enough in the world for the  
 “ industry of us all: But we must repeat, that  
 “ if unadvised measures are adopted, they are  
 “ likely to affect the prosperity of the British  
 “ commerce,

“ commerce, without promoting that of Ire-  
 “ land.”

If it should be the disposition of the respectable and leading men of Great Britain to feel such sentiments and to hold such language, it is beyond a doubt that much farther information might be collected from them; and it seems impracticable to advance without their aid and advice.

There are many theorems of trade which are plausible on paper, yet it may be impossible for trading nations to adopt them. Maxims being too narrow to embrace all the combinations of human events, political operations must often be influenced by circumstances.

It is an old, but not the less fallible principle of state-policy, that whoever is the cause of another's advancement, contributes to his own diminution. The opposite position is oftener applicable to the respective situations of merchants and mercantile bodies, or of commercial nations. It is now well understood that the flourishing of neighbouring nations in their trade is to our advantage, and that if we could extinguish their industry and manufactures, our own would languish from the want of emulation and interchange. This reasoning is, or ought to be, still better understood with  
 respect

respect to different parts of the same empire. If we are capable of looking beyond the extent of a single shop-board, we cannot consider the Irish as rivals in interest, even though they should become our associates in lucrative pursuits. Mr. Davenant, who had some jealousies respecting their progress in particular branches of trade, and who, in the close of the last century, recommended the bill to prevent the export of their woollen manufactures, was still extremely doubtful as to his own reasonings, and appears to have admitted a position current in the speculations of those days, “ that the  
 “ *lucrum cessans* of Ireland is the *damnum*  
 “ *emergens* of England.” Sir M. Decker, who wrote in a subsequent period, and upon some points with singular ability, was clearly of opinion, that the restraints on the Irish woollens contributed, in their effect, to diminish the foreign trade of Great Britain. He describes monopolies as a species of trade-tyranny, whereby the many are oppressed for the gain and good pleasure of a few:——  
 “ Never yet (he observes) was a monopoly  
 “ lized trade extended to the degree of a free  
 “ one.”——“ We, in our abundant wisdom,  
 “ pay nearly all the charges of Government,  
 “ whilst large classes of our fellow-  
 “ subjects are made unable to contribute more  
 T . “ than

“ than a trifle to the general support.”—  
 “ They exist, indeed, under the protection of  
 “ fleets which cost them not a doit; we con-  
 “ trive to starve them without expence, and  
 “ ourselves with; we drive one part of our  
 “ people out of trade by monopolies, and the  
 “ other by taxes. We bleed ourselves almost  
 “ to death, and think to recruit our spirits by  
 “ devouring millions of famished fellow-sub-  
 “ jects: thus, by excess of cunning, we make  
 “ the ruin general.”

There is a modern anecdote of a Dutchman,  
 who was employed to settle the woollen manu-  
 facture at Abbeville, and stipulated that no  
 work of the same kind should be carried on  
 within thirty leagues. This might help to in-  
 troduce and give stability to an useful and ex-  
 pensive manufacture, such as in the event that  
 of Abbeville has proved. When, however, the  
 advantages are once settled, and the art in  
 question generally known, such a monopoly  
 may indeed give a personal advantage, but it  
 must operate to the detriment of the whole cir-  
 cle which is swept by its radius. Particular  
 merchants or manufacturers, as well as parti-  
 cular districts, may, as in the instance just men-  
 tioned, derive a reasonable advantage from the  
 exclusive possession of new branches of trade;  
 but when those branches have fairly taken root,  
 such

such advantages bear hard on other merchants, manufacturers, and districts, and operate powerfully against general emulation, and the interests both of commerce and of the state. It seems demonstrable, that the export of native manufactured commodities from any one part of the King's dominions, must be advantageous to the whole, whenever the burdens and duties are so regulated as to leave no exclusive advantage; for that again would operate as a monopoly.

Subject to the last remark, it is farther demonstrable, that Great Britain loses whenever Ireland is deprived of any reasonable gain.—And with respect to the situation of the latter for the western navigation, we know that it is the interest of a dominion to carry on her commerce, from whatever corner she can conduct it to the best advantage; and it would be thought a gross absurdity in the City of London, if because Bristol is so situated as to have an advantage in the Irish trade, the former should desire to have the port of the latter shut up.

In all these reasonings, the commercial and political interests are inseparably blended. When the liberty of commerce is unequally enjoyed, one part of an empire may be in danger of becoming a burden to the other. An increase of support in aid of the common exertions, might



in course of time result to Ireland from the advancement of her trade, and from the produce of duties, analogous to those of Great Britain.

It is sometimes found, that a liberty to export manufactures, increases the produce of raw materials beyond the demand of the particular manufacture; and from the experience of the linen trade, it might be doubted whether less woollen yarn would be exported to Great Britain by Ireland, if the export of manufactured woollens were less restrained; in which case the smuggling of raw wool to the continent of Europe might be checked. It is said that, the wool of the southern nations being tender, and that of the northern countries being harsh, it is of great importance to both to obtain British or Irish wool, which, like a middle quality, unites equally with the two extremes, and produces an excellent cloth, that rivals our own.—It is the computation of many disinterested writers on this subject, that one pack of Irish wool works up two packs of French wool, which would not otherwise be saleable; and Sir M. Decker labours much to shew that the benefit resulting to England, by every pack of wool manufactured in Ireland, instead of being run to France, amounts to fifty-six pounds sterling; which indeed he founds upon an estimate, that one-third of what Ireland gets centers at last in

Great Britain. It must still be observed, that no extent of the woollen manufacture can be expected to prevent entirely the exportation of the raw materials, the demand for which is such as to elude all the contrivances of law, and all the vigilance of coast-officers even in Great Britain; and this is analogous to a remark of Mr. Locke's, that " it is death in Spain to export  
 " money, and yet they who furnish all the world  
 " with gold and silver, have least of it among  
 " themselves; trade fetches it away from that  
 " lazy and indigent people, notwithstanding all  
 " their artificial and forced contrivances to keep  
 " it there; it follows trade against the rigour  
 " of their laws, and their want of foreign commodities makes it openly be carried out at  
 " noon-day."

I must however again observe to your Lordship, that all these theorems of trade, however plausible they may appear on paper, must be received subject to much previous examination, and a diligent discussion of all collateral circumstances. We are not to proceed with that short-sighted wisdom which may enable us to shun the mere difficulty of a day; still less are we, upon a sudden outcry, which like other commercial complaints may be fallacious or ill-founded, to make a sudden revolution in all the practical system of our trade; and upon the  
 spur

spur of a moment to overturn a plan of commerce and revenue which has been the work of ages.

•We are to proceed upon the principle, that what we are to give shall be for the good of the whole: Ireland is a jewel to our crown, and not a thorn in our side. The point is, to know what solid assistance can be given, and in what form it can best be given. When men talk of an union to be completed between two great nations, as the cure of all their ills, they talk rashly, and like the state empiric described to your Lordship in my first letter. The case of Scotland was different in every point of view, and the benefits resulting to her by the act of union do not apply to the present consideration. There can be little doubt, that, in the present instance, the separate legislatures of the two countries are fully equal to all the difficulty:—we shall sufficiently know, from a cordial and temperate communication with Ireland herself, what specific measures will be of service to her: we shall know too, from the information to be collected at home, what measures may be adopted with a due regard to the general interests of commerce. We are not to subject ourselves to the remark left by Dean Swift, who says, that in his time, when any thing kind had been intended towards Ireland, she

she was invariably treated like a sick lady, who has physic sent by doctors at a distance, strangers to her constitution and the nature of her disease.

It may even deserve enquiry, whether the unqualified grant of every thing that human ingenuity can bring within the description of a free trade, would have the effects expected, or convey the relief which is wanted and intended. It was once supposed, that because the importation of Irish cattle into England had been prohibited, with a view to advance the rents of English landlords, and the interests of the feeding countries, the suspension of that measure might be of use to Ireland: this was accordingly tried (and nearly within our memory); but it was a matter of great offence to many of the Irish inhabitants, who resisted the exportation; few cattle, therefore, were brought to Great Britain, and those were chiefly lean.

We should recollect, that though Ireland has at all times had full liberty to manufacture goods for her own consumption, the consumers have hitherto found it easier to purchase from England many articles both of luxury and convenience, than to make them at home. That jealousy must be very lively indeed, which, contemplating this circumstance, can derive disquietude from such reasonings, as that a  
people

*people should suddenly run away with an extensive commerce, because they are admitted to a participation of its advantages.*

\*The change is more difficult from indolence to industry, than it is from labour to ease ; and it is forcibly observed by Mr. Hume, that  
 “ when one nation has got the start of another  
 “ in a trade, it is very difficult for the latter  
 “ to gain the ground which she has lost, because of the superior industry and skill of the  
 “ former, and the greater stock of which its  
 “ merchants are possessed, and which enables  
 “ them to trade for so much smaller profits.”

Amidst the difficulties which time, and the fostering attention of this country, alone can enable Ireland to overcome, it deserves remark, that she has little coal, is ill provided with wood, and is also without inland navigations.—In short, the constitution and establishment of a flourishing commerce imply a well-regulated order through the nation, a steady and effective police, habits of docility and industry, skill in manufactures, and large capitals in trade ; all which can be the result only of a continued and gradual progress, aided by a combination of other favouring circumstances.

No prudent man, however sure of his principles, will venture to issue prophecies upon  
 the

the course of human events; but I see much solid ground to hope that an amicable discussion between the two kingdoms, promoted with activity, moderated by temper, and guided by discretion, may tend to convey essential benefits to Ireland, without any permanent disadvantage to Great Britain. I am unwilling to think, for a moment, that the salutary effects of such a discussion may be frustrated by popular impatience and precipitation.

I shall subjoin\* to this Letter a Table of English Acts, respecting the trade to and from Ireland; and also an account of some particulars respecting the Course of Exchange between Dublin and London, the estates of absentees, the debt of Ireland, and the revenue and expences of the Irish Government. I happen to have these papers in my possession, and they seem at least sufficiently accurate to be of some assistance to your Lordship in the consideration now before you.

I am, my dear LORD,

Respectfully and affectionately, &c.

W. EDEN.

\* Appendix, No. I, II, III, IV, V.



# P P E N D I X.

## No. I.

THINGS made in ENGLAND, restrain-  
ing TRADE to and from IRELAND.

*Sheep, Wool, &c.*

PROHIBITS the exportation of rams, 8 Eliz. c. 8.  
sheep, or lambs alive, from England  
Ireland.

Prohibit the exportation of sheep-wool, 12 Car. II. c. 32.  
wool-fells, mortlings, shortlings; yarn 13 & 14 Car. II. c. 18.  
made of wool, wool-flocks, fullers-earth,  
and fulling-clay, from England or Ire-  
land.

Prohibits also the exportation of tobacco- 8 Geo. 3.  
pipe clay.

Tobacco-pipe clay not to be exported from 9 & 10 W. III. c. 40.  
Great Britain into Ireland. sect. 2.

Prohibit the exportation of wool, wool- 10 & 11 W. III. c. 10.  
ells, &c.; and also worsted-yarn, woollen- 5 Geo. I. c. 11. sect. 21.  
yarn, cloth, serge, bays, kerseys, says, 5 Geo. II. c. 21.  
sizés, druggetts, cloth-ferges, shalloons,  
or other drapery stuffs, or woollen-manu-  
factures from Ireland, *except to Great Bri-  
tain*, as by list No. II.

Ends the prohibition to coverlids, wad- 12 Geo. II. c. 21.  
ings, or other manufactures made of sect. 9.  
wool, slightly stitched or worked toge-



ther, so as to be reduced to wool again and to matresses and beds, stuffed with combed wool, or wool fit for combining.

**Seft. 11.** The above articles are not to be laden on board any ship bound to foreign parts, nor be laden or carried coastwise from any part of Great Britain or Ireland to any other part, without a license from the commissioners or officers of the customs, and fees as are given to land accordingly.

### *Navigation and Plantations.*

12 Car. II. c. 18.

seft. 18.

22 & 23 Car. II. c. 26.

seft. 10 & 11.

7 & 8 W. III. c. 22.

seft. 14 & 15.

3 & 4 Ann, c. 5.

seft. 12.

3 & 4 Ann, c. 10.

8 Geo. I. c. 11. seft. 24.

8 Geo. I. c. 18. seft. 22.

4 Geo. II. c. 15.

4 Geo. III. c. 15.

seft. 27.

5 Geo. III. c. 37.

seft. 4.

By these acts, the following articles, being the growth, product, or manufacture of any British Plantation in Africa, Asia, or America, cannot be imported into Ireland, except they are first landed in Great Britain, viz. sugar, tobacco, cotton-wool, indico, ginger, nutmeg, or other drying wood, Specie of mahogany wood, rice, melasses, tar, pitch, turpentine, masts, yards and bowsprit, beaver-skins and other furs, copper, coffee, pimento, cocoa-nuts, whalebone, raw silk, hides and skins, pot and potashes, and gum fenega.

4 Geo. II. c. 15.

7 Geo. III. c. 2.

But all other goods (except hops) of the growth, product, or manufacture of any British Plantations, may be imported from the said Colonies into Ireland, in British shipping, where the master, and three-fourths of the crew, are British.

15 Car. II. c. 7. seft. 6.

7 & 8 W. III. c. 22.

seft. 2.

Goods the product of Europe, cannot be imported into any British Plantation

less shipped in Great Britain, and carried directly from thence in British-built shipping.

Except salt for the fisheries. Horses and victual and linen cloth from Ireland, by 3 & 4 Ann, c. 8. and 3 Geo. I. c. 21. Provisions, and implements for the fisheries, by 15 Geo. III. c. 31. sect. 5. Clothing and accoutrements for the army, by 15 Geo. III. c. 45. and other articles of Irish manufacture permitted to be exported directly from thence into the British Plantations, by 18 Geo. III. c. 55. *Vide* No. II.

#### *Salt.*

Salt, of or from Ireland, not to be imported into Great Britain, except necessary provisions for the ship, or for curing fish. 2 & 3 Ann, c. 14.

#### *Hops.*

Hops not to be imported into Ireland, except from Great Britain only, and of British growth. 9 Ann, c. 12. sect. 27  
5 Geo. II. c. 9.  
7 Geo. II. c. 19.

Hops of British growth, exported to Ireland, not to drawback the duty. 6 Geo. I. c. 11. sect. 5

#### *East India Goods.*

Wrought silks, bengals and stuffs mixed with silk, and herba muslins and other calicoes of the manufacture of Persia, China, or East India, are not to be imported into Ireland, except from Great Britain. 5 Geo. I. c. 11. sect. 1

No

- I. c. 21. sect. 9. No commodity of the growth, product, or manufacture of the East Indies, and other places beyond the Cape of Good Hope, is to be imported into Ireland, except from Great Britain, in ships navigated according to law.

*Rum, Spirits, and Sugar, &c.*

- II. c. 13. sect. 4. Sugars, panelles, syrups, or melasses, of the growth, product, or manufacture of any colonies in America, and rum or spirits of America (except of the growth or manufacture of the British sugar colonies there), are not to be imported into Ireland, unless shipped in Great Britain, in ships navigated according to law.

Confirmed, as to sugar, by 12 Geo. II. c. 30. sect. 16. and by 4 Geo. III. c. 15. sect. 19.

- o. III. c. 43. 30. Brandy, rum, or other spirits, not to be exported from Ireland in ships under 100 tons burthen.

- Geo. III. c. 55. 1. Rum, sugar, coffee, or any goods which are by law prohibited to be imported from Ireland into Great Britain, are not to be exported, or entered for exportation, from Ireland to Great Britain.

- sect. 5. Rum or spirits of the British Colonies or Plantations in America, are not to be imported into Ireland in any ship under 70 tons burthen, either from the Colonies or from Great Britain; and foreign Brandy, or other spirits, from any other place whatsoever.

whatsoever, are not to be imported in ships under 100 tons.

No part of the old subsidy to be drawn back for any sugars of the growth, produce, or manufacture of any foreign Colony or Plantation not under the dominion of his Majesty, which shall be exported from Great Britain to Ireland. 12 Geo. III. c. 60  
sect. 6.

### *Glass.*

No glass of any kind or denomination, other than the manufacture of Great Britain, may be imported into Ireland. 19 Geo. II. c. 12,  
sect. 22.

No glass of any kind may be exported from Ireland, or laden on any horse, carriage or vessel, with intent to be so exported. Sect. 24.

### *Sail-cloth.*

An additional duty was laid upon all canvas or sail-cloth, the manufacture of Ireland, imported into Great Britain during the continuance of a bounty granted in Ireland, by an act 19 Geo. II. upon the exportation of sail-cloth from that kingdom, viz. for sail-cloth of the value of 14 *d.* per yard, and upwards, 4 *d.* per yard. Of 10 *d.* and under 14 *d.* per yard, 2 *d.* 23 Geo. II. c. 22,  
sect. 1.

### *Corn.*

Corn exported from Great Britain or Ireland, to the Isle of Man, not to be allowed any bounty. 5 Geo. III. c. 30,  
sect. 11.

### *Cambricks*

*Cambricks or Lawns.*Geo. III. c. 43.  
5.

No cambrick or lawn whatsoever to be imported from Ireland into any part of Great Britain, until the importation of cambricks and French lawns into Ireland shall be prohibited by law.

*Tobacco.*Geo. III. c. 35.  
.2.

Tobacco, the growth, product, or manufacture of Ireland, not to be exported from thence to any place except Great Britain.

*Duties.*

Car. II. c. 4.

By the book of rates and subsequent acts all goods imported into Great Britain from Ireland, unless in particular cases where Ireland is expressly excepted (*Vi. No. II.*), are liable to the same duties the like goods are chargeable with if imported from other foreign parts.

The following articles may be imported from Ireland, but are subject to duties which are equal to a prohibition, *viz.*

	The duty.
Woollen cloths,	1 12 $8\frac{1}{2}\frac{4}{6}$ per yard
— stuffs,	0 4 9 per yard
Tallow candles,	1 4 $1\frac{1}{2}\frac{3}{6}$ per cwt.
Sope, - - -	1 13 $9\frac{6}{2}\frac{6}{6}$ per cwt.

## No. II.

# ACTS made in ENGLAND in favour of TRADE to and from IRELAND.

## *Wool, Woollen, and other Manufactures.*

PERMITS the importation of woollen cloths, woollen caps, andirons, and a great variety of enumerated manufactures in leather, iron, steel, &c. to be sold in this kingdom, if made and wrought in Ireland; which are prohibited to be so imported from other parts.

3 Edw. IV. c. 4.

permits the importation of woollen and bay-yarn into Great Britain from Ireland, duty-free.

12 Geo. II. c. 21.  
sect. 1.

In several subsequent acts permitted the exportation of raw and manufactured wool from particular ports in Ireland to particular ports in England, enumerated in the acts upon the security to land it accordingly, and other regulations prescribed by the 10 & 11 W. III. c. 10.—

1 W. & M. c. 32.  
sect. 6.

7 & 8 W. III. c. 28.  
sect. 5.

10 & 11 W. III. c. 10.

But,  
permits wool, woollen, or bay-yarn, woollens, shortlings, mortlings, wool-flocks, and worsted-yarn, to be exported from any port in Ireland to any port in Great Britain, under the security and regulations prescribed

26 Geo. II. c. 11.

prescribed by 10 & 11 W. III. c. 10. for the former articles.

5 Geo. III. c. 45.

Clothing and accoutrements, the produce of Great Britain or Ireland, for the use of his Majesty's forces abroad, paid in part out of the Irish revenue, may be exported from Ireland.

*Navigation and Plantations.*

12 Car. II. c. 18.  
7 & 8 W. III. c. 22.

Ships built in Ireland, navigated with the people thereof, are deemed British, and qualified to trade to and from the British Plantations.

12 Car. II. c. 18. sect. 7.  
13 & 14 Car. II. c. 11.  
sect. 6.

Ships built in Ireland, and navigated with his Majesty's subjects of Ireland, are intitled to the same abatement and privileges to which importers or exporters of goods in British-built ships are intitled in the book of rates.

18 Geo. III. c. 55.  
sect. 9.

Ships built in Ireland, and owned by his Majesty's subjects residing in any part of the British dominions in Europe, to be deemed British built, and intitled to the like privileges and advantages in all respects, as ships built in Great Britain and

Ships belonging to any of his Majesty's subjects residing in Ireland, and not British built, are to be intitled to the same privileges and advantages in all parts of his Majesty's dominions, as ships belonging to his Majesty's subjects residing in Great Britain, and not British or Irish built, intitled to,

Per

ermits the exportation of servants, horses, and victual from Ireland to the British Plantations. 15 Car. II. c. 7. sect. 7.

Permit the importation of linen cloth of and from Ireland, into the British Plantations. 3 & 4 Ann. c. 8.  
3 Geo. I. c. 21. sect. 1.

Makes it lawful to export, under certain regulations, directly from Ireland, into the British Plantations in America or the West Indies, or any British settlement on the coast of Africa, 18 Geo. III. c. 55.  
sect. 1.

Any goods the produce or manufacture of Ireland, except wool and woollen-manufactures, cotton-manufactures;

Hats, glass, hops, gunpowder and coals;

And all goods of the growth, product, or manufacture of Great Britain, legally imported from thence into Ireland, except woollen-manufactures and glass;

And all foreign certificate goods, legally imported from Great Britain into Ireland;

But not to extend to foreign linen painted, &c. in Ireland,

Nor to bar-iron, iron slit or rolled, plated or tinned, nor any manufactured iron-wares, till a duty is imposed thereon in Ireland;

Nor to any such articles, if a bounty or premium is allowed thereon:

And not to take place with respect to goods the manufacture of Ireland, except and until they are chargeable with duties to as great an amount as the like goods are



charged with on exportation from Great Britain.

Geo. II. c. 15.

Geo. II. c. 9.

Geo. III. c. 2.

Permit the importation of all non-enumerate goods (except hops) of the growth, product, or manufacture of the British Plantations, directly from thence into Ireland

*Hemp, Flax, Linen, and Cotton.*

& 8 W. III. c. 39.

6 Geo. II. c. 26.

Act, 6.

Hemp and flax, and any manufacture made thereof in Ireland, may be imported into Great Britain from thence, free of duties, upon certificate verifying the manufacture, &c.

Geo. I. c. 21. sect. 2.

All linen made in Ireland, and imported into Great Britain, may be again exported to any British Plantation in America without payment of any duty whatsoever.

8 Geo. III. c. 56.

Cotton yarn, the manufacture of Ireland may be imported into Great Britain duty free.

*Other Articles which are permitted to be imported into Great Britain from Ireland, & exported duty-free, viz.*

Geo. III. c. 46.

Act, 5.

Gum fenega, or gum arabic; 30 tons may be exported annually from Great Britain to Ireland duty-free, by licence from the Treasury, to be used in the linen manufactures of that kingdom.

Geo. III. c. 39.

8 Geo. III. c. 36.

Raw hides of steers, cows, or any other cattle (except horses, mares, or geldings) and calve skins, or goat skins, raw or undressed, may be imported into Great Britain from Ireland, duty-free.

Rap

rape seed and rape cakes may be imported 15 Geo. III. c. 34.  
 into Great Britain from Ireland, duty-free.  
 salted beef, pork, bacon, and butter, and 16 Geo. III. c. 8.  
 cattle, the laws permitting the importation  
 from Ireland into Great Britain duty-  
 free, are made perpetual. .  
 To permit the importation of tallow, hog's lard, 7 Geo. III. c. 12.  
 and grease, duty-free, till the 25th March continued by  
 1782, from any place. 19 Geo. III. c. 22.  
 sect. 4.

### *Tea.*

Tea exported to Ireland as merchandize, to 17 Geo. III. c. 27.  
 drawback the whole customs, subject to  
 the regulations prescribed by 12 Geo. III.  
 c. 60. and 16 Geo. III. c. 51.

### *Bounties granted and payable in Great Britain, for encouraging the Linen Manufactures.*

To grant the same bounty on Irish linen made 29 Geo. II. c. 15.  
 of hemp or flax, exported from Great Bri- 19 Geo. III. c. 27.  
 tain, as is allowed on British linen ex-  
 ported, viz.

For every yard 25 inches			
broad, and under the value			
of 5 d. per yard,	-	0	0 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Of the value of 5 d. and under			
6 d. per yard,	-	-	0 0 1
Of the value of 6 d. and not			
exceeding 1 s. 6 d. per			
yard,	-	-	0 0 1 $\frac{1}{2}$

To grant an additional bounty of 5 s. per hogf- 15 Geo. III. c. 45.  
 head upon flax seed imported into Ire- sect. 3.  
 land, for which a bounty is allowed in 16 Geo. III. c. 41.  
 that kingdom, by Acts made there in the  
 third and sixteenth years of his Majesty.

Grants

Geo. III. c. 37.

Grants the following bounties on hemp, the growth of Ireland, imported from thence into Great Britain.

From  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 24 \text{ June } 1779 \\ 24 \text{ June } 1780 \\ 24 \text{ June } 1793 \end{array} \right\}$  to  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 24 \text{ June } 1786, 8 \text{ l.} \\ 24 \text{ June } 1793, 6 \text{ l.} \\ 24 \text{ June } 1800, 4 \text{ l.} \end{array} \right\}$  per Ton.

*Bounties, &c. for the Encouragement of the Fisheries.*

Geo. III. c. 37.  
1. 1.

British-built ships, owned by his Majesty's subjects residing in Great Britain or Ireland, &c. catching a certain number of fish on the Banks of Newfoundland, and arriving with the same at Newfoundland under the regulations prescribed in the Act, are to be allowed,

To the 25 vessels first arriving, 40 l. each } annually,  
100 next arriving, - 20 l. each } 11 years  
100 next arriving, - 10 l. each }

sect. 3. British-built ships owned by his Majesty's subjects, residing in Great Britain or Ireland, proceeding from thence and killing one whale, at least, in the Gulph of Lawrence, or on the coast of Labrador, Newfoundland, or in any seas to southward of the Greenland seas and Davis Straights, and returning within the space of one year to some port in England with oil of such whales so taken, are to be allowed for five ships, viz.

For the ship arriving  
with the greatest quantity £. 500 } in e  
with the next Do. - 400 } year  
with the next - - 300 } 11  
with the next - - 200 }  
with the next - - 100 }

And the oil to be landed free of duty.

Gr:

rants the same bounties to whales so taken in the seas to the southward of the latitude of forty-four degrees North. 16 Geo. III. c. 47.

ships fitted out from Ireland in the whale fishery, to the Greenland seas, Davis Straights, and the adjacent seas, under the regulations prescribed, are to be allowed, on their return to some port in Great Britain, 15 Geo. III. c. 31. sect. 21.

from { 2 Dec. 1775 } { 25 Dec. 1776, 40 s. } per  
 { 25 Dec. 1776 } to { 25 Dec. 1781, 30 s. } Ton.  
 { 25 Dec. 1781 } { 25 Dec. 1786, 20 s. }

the above-mentioned bounties for ships employed in the whale fisheries are to be allowed, although the whole and entire property of the ship doth not belong to some of his Majesty's subjects residing in that part of his Majesty's dominions from whence the ship is fitted and cleared out. 18 Geo. III. c. 55. sect. 8.

his Majesty's subjects residing in Ireland may transport, directly from thence to Newfoundland, or to any part of America where the fishery is carried on, provisions, hooks, lines, netting, or other tools or implements necessary for the fishery, being the product and manufacture of Great Britain or Ireland. 15 Geo. III. c. 31. sect. 5.

oil, blubber, or whale fins, taken in any part of the ocean by, and imported in any ship belonging to, his Majesty's subjects of Great Britain or Ireland, to be imported duty-free. Sect. 9.

walrus skins, raw and undressed, caught by the crew of any vessel belonging to, and fitted 10. Sect. 10.

fitted out from, Great Britain or Ireland  
may be imported duty-free.

*Tobacco.*

- Geo. I. c. 21, sect. 48. Tobacco exported to Ireland, if less appears to be landed than shipped in Great Britain, an allowance not exceeding Two per cent. may be made for waste during the voyage.
- 9 Geo. III. c. 35. Repeals the Acts 12 and 15 Car. II. and any other Act which prohibits or restrains the setting, planting, or improving, to growing, making, or curing tobacco, either in free plant, or otherwise, in Ireland.

## No. III.

*Course of Exchange.*

THE par between London and Dublin is  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.—100 l. British being worth 6 s. 8 d. Irish.

During the years 1778 and 1779, the Exchange of Dublin on London has varied from  $9\frac{1}{8}$ —October 27, 1779, it was at  $6\frac{1}{4}$ : this is remarkably low; and the following causes are assigned for its being so much in favour of Ireland:

A large importation of specie, by the negociated with monied people, &c. in England, and by the late remittance to Ireland for public service.

The non-payment of rents, which has withdrawn within Ireland much money, that would otherwise have been remitted to absentees.

The non-importation agreements, and large exports in the provision trade, and in wines.

*Prices of Bullion.*

Gold, in October 1779, was at 4 l. per ounce in Dublin. The usual price had been from 5 s. to 4 l. 2 s. The fall is imputed to the exchange, which sufficiently accounts for it.

Silver, in October 1779, was at 5 s. 6 d. per ounce. The medium price had been 5 s. 10 d. This is imputed to the selling more old plate, than the manufacturing less new plate, than

## . No. IV.

**A**Ccording to an abstract of a list of estates of absentees, published in January 1769,

The estates of those who live constantly abroad, and are seldom or never in Ireland amount to 371,900*l.*

And the estates of those who live generally abroad, and visit Ireland occasionally, amount to 117,800*l.*

The debt of Ireland, at Lady-day 1769 amounted to 1,141,591*l.* 7*s.* 11¼*d.* exclusive of which, Ireland has raised 740,000*l.* by annuities, with benefit of survivorship, 440,000*l.* at 6 *per cent.* and 300,000*l.* at 5 *per cent.*

## No. V.

**A** Two years average estimate of the revenue, and expence of the Irish Government, according to late experience.

	£.	
Hereditary Revenue, gross—		
about - - -	1,200,000	
Old additional Duties—about	380,000	
New additional Duties—about	140,000	
Stamp Duties—about - -	40,000	
Vice-Treasurers, and Pells, ancient		
Fees and Salaries—about -	40,000	
	<hr/>	£. 1,800,000
Deduct		
Expence of Management—about	483,000	
Drawbacks, &c.—about -	3,000	
Expence attending Stamp Duties—		
about - - -	14,000	
	<hr/>	500,000
	Nett Produce	£. 1,300,000
Expences.		
Civil List—about -	330,000	
Military Establishment—about	938,000	
Extraordinary Expences—about	432,000	
	<hr/>	
Total Expence	£. 1,700,000	

F I N I S.





O B S E R V A T I O N S

O N T H E

M A N U F A C T U R E S , T R A D E ,

A N D

P R E S E N T S T A T E O F I R E L A N D .



# OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

MANUFACTURES,

TRADE,

AND

PRESENT STATE

OF

IRELAND.

BY JOHN LORD SHEFFIELD.

——— Non Hostem, inimicaque Castra  
Argivûm, vestras Spœs Uritis ———

PART THE FIRST.

LONDON:

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M.DCC.LXXXV.



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## A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

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THE following Observations consist principally of materials, which were intended to be employed in another work. Such reputation as might have been acquired by attention to style, ornament, and arrangement, is sacrificed for the sake of stating, while it is not too late, to the People of Great Britain, as well as to those of Ireland, some facts, very interesting to them, and the knowledge of which possibly may be of service with respect to the questions that are immediately to come before the Legislature.

As it is the management of these times to conceal from the Public the measures that are intended, and as Ministers are satisfied with carrying certain questions through Parliament without troubling themselves about farther considerations, the Author can only reason on the general notoriety of those measures; and he shall be happy if at least part of that, to which it is said the Government of the two kingdoms is pledged, may not prove true. A wish to serve both countries could alone have induced him to undertake as disagreeable a task as has ever fallen to his lot; and when he adds, that he is sensible how much of what he states is likely, till well understood, to be displeasing to many in both countries, and unlikely to suit their prejudices, he, on those accounts, hopes he may claim some sort of merit. The Manufacturers of Britain will not be satisfied

fatisfied with all his doctrines ; but in this he must acquiesce for the present, as the experience of mankind tells us, that he who does not go every length with those who are interested in a question, unavoidably risks their good opinion.

In respect to Ireland, it is painful to him in an extreme degree, to seem even to the most prejudiced and unreasonable, to take a part against her in the proposed arrangement with Britain, although it be only in the single point relative to the alteration of the Navigation Act ; (for he cannot consider Protecting Duties as the wish of that country at large ; ) but he is convinced that the generality of the People of Ireland are not aware of the whole extent of what has been desired on that head. He thinks them more reasonable than to form such a wish, and is



sure that when the consequences of the proposed alteration are laid before them, that generosity of character, for which they are distinguished, must prevent their continuing to ask it ; and it is only by stating the case of Britain strongly, that they are likely to see how unreasonable their claim is. If he were even to consider the matter merely as an Irishman, who only cared for one part of the empire, without the least regard for the good and advantage of the whole, he would not wish the measure to take place ; because, if Britain should be surprised into it, and the alteration which is desired should ignorantly and inconsiderately be made, he knows she must reclaim the concession she had made. He most ardently wishes that such a mortification may be spared to Ireland, and that the consequences which would result from it, may be prevented ; and it is from this

## ADVERTISEMENT. v

with he is induced to take a part in the question. If merely from the fear of risking the unfavourable opinion of the People of that Country, he should withhold the information which is in his power, or decline to state matters which they ought to know, he should feel himself unworthy to belong to them; and he should think it dishonest, in the highest degree, to enter on the subject, without the resolution to treat it with the utmost impartiality. If he had prejudices, they would probably be in favour of Ireland; and perhaps their foundation might be traced to the indignation he has formerly felt on the treatment of that country. He is, however, equally interested in the welfare of both countries; and if he could suspect himself of partiality to either of them, he most assuredly would have avoided the subject. His situation in respect to both, may and ought

ought to prevent his being prejudiced ; at least it is such as has served to give him some knowledge of the interests of each. He can have no motive for taking part against either : his desire was to represent the real state of Ireland, as far as he could ; to prevent mischievous, idle, or unavailing clamour, and to counteract the designs of those whose object is to mislead and dupe the people.

It will give him great satisfaction, if now, or in future, these Observations should lead to cool and dispassionate examination, and in the end, to the mutual advantage of Great Britain and Ireland. He has stated many facts ; he has freely observed upon those facts ; and he hopes what he has remarked will give rise to reflections more useful and important.

The Tables will give a more correct idea of the state of Manufactures and Trade than could have been formed without them. A greater detail relative to parts of the Fisheries, to particular Manufactures, and to the trade to some countries, which, however, may not at present be of much consequence, should have been given, if there had been more time ; but it being declared, that the very business, which is the principal object of these Observations, is immediately to be discussed, the information herein contained, such as it is, if delayed, would have come too late. If there had been leisure for the purpose, the author would have informed himself more fully on some other points, and the whole of what he now offers, might have appeared in a more finished state.

The author takes his leave, by wishing his exertions, in favour of the great points which were the objects of the Navigation Laws, may not be confounded with narrow restrictions relative to Manufactures and Commerce in general. He is rather disposed to discountenance and dissuade all restraints, except those which are necessary to support the British Marine, to make Britain the mart of commerce, and to secure to her Dominions the only return she can reap for the great expence of her foreign settlements, namely, the monopoly of their supply.

SHEFFIELD PLACE,  
Jan. 25, 1785.

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# O B S E R V A T I O N S

O N T H E

M A N U F A C T U R E S , T R A D E ,

A N D

P R E S E N T S T A T E O F I R E L A N D .

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**T**HE extensions given in the course of the last six years to the trade and commerce of Ireland, are so recent in the recollection of both kingdoms, that it would be superfluous to state them in detail, notwithstanding that they form the ground work of the following Observations. It would be equally superfluous to record, as the sequel of that detail, the expressions used by a warm-hearted people, in the first flow of their sentiments, under a change of circumstances, most auspicious

B

cious, it may be hoped, not only to them, but to the prosperity of the whole British empire, of which they form a considerable part. Ireland had been placed by the hand of Providence in an advanced situation between the two Continents, with excellent harbours towards the prevailing winds, and with the blessing of a fertile soil, and temperate climate ; but she had nevertheless long laboured in an inefficient and helpless poverty, under a system of restraints equally pernicious, unwise, and unjust.—It is natural, that the minds of her people should be elated on the emancipation of their industry and activity ; and perhaps a considerable period must elapse, before they settle sufficiently, either to ascertain the intrinsic value of their late acquisitions, or to adopt the means of applying those acquisitions to the best effect : the best habits of exertion are not suddenly to be expected, though they may gradually be formed by the natural progression of a free commerce, and the fostering attention of a wise and settled government.

From such attainments alone can result that increase of stock and capital, which

will be essentially necessary, before Ireland can avail herself of half her advantages. In the mean time, many of her people seem disposed rather to seek farther speculative and theoretical claims, than to cultivate the solid benefits which they actually possess ; whilst others are risking and prejudicing the principal staple of their country, by forcing its weak capital into too many and new branches. These unsteady and extravagant attempts have a tendency not only to check trade, but to provoke retaliation.

It is now well known among commercial nations, that manufactures, forced, and supported by bounties and prohibitions, cannot long thrive, and are not only a loss to the community, in proportion to their expence, but are farther pernicious, by tempting away hands from the thriving manufactures. By aiming at too many things at once, Ireland will succeed in none ; but by pursuing certain staple articles that best suit her, she may bring them to that perfection which will command the markets. A country, of the extent of Ireland, cannot expect to prevail in every manufacture ; she may trifle in many,



but she can excel at foreign markets in few ; and those, under proper management, may be amply sufficient to give both employment and affluence to her people.—It is the abundance of a manufacture, and the general establishment of it in a country, that makes it both cheap and good.

The Irish have been represented as being lazy, and not disposed to labour : they are, however, of an active nature, and capable of the greatest exertions ; and of as good a disposition as any nation, in the same state of improvement : their Generosity, Hospitality, and Bravery, are proverbial : intelligence and zeal in whatever they undertake will not be wanting : but it has been the fashion to judge of them from their outcasts. The Highlanders of Scotland, in their state of nature, are also said to be indolent. That men who have very little to do, should appear to do little, is not strange ; but who thinks them indolent, when brought into situations where they can act ? The Highlanders, indeed, have still less reason for indolence than the Irish ; the country of the former with difficulty

culty can subsist them, while the plentiful soil of Ireland encourages idleness.—Perhaps the cheapness of the common food, potatoes, may be justly deemed a cause of idleness, and consequently detrimental to manufactures; a small garden of potatoes will subsist a family. Few countries have become completely industrious, till the price of provisions was comparatively high. In how many towns, even of England, where the manufacturers can acquire a subsistence, without daily labour, do numbers of them consume the Monday and Tuesday in idleness? The common people of Ireland have not had the encouragement they might have had, if an unfortunate difference of religion had not prevailed, and if it had not been thought a necessary policy, not to bring forward the mass of the people who differed from the reformed church, but more especially because their principles were supposed to be hostile not only to the established religion, but to the established government. . Lately, the severe laws against Roman Catholics have been repealed, and many unnecessary restraints removed; Restraints which had shamefully lasted too long, and can only be accounted for by the  
acrimony

acrimony of the times in which they were imposed. At present, perhaps, the improvement of Ireland is as rapid as any country ever experienced, nor will any thing check it, but the weakness of human nature, an ill-founded dissatisfaction, and an extravagant disposition to innovation and change.

Jealousies in trade between England, Scotland, and Ireland will ever occur. Such jealousies in some respects stimulate useful competition, and in the end improve manufactures, and promote trade. In the fermentation and progress of such jealousies, appeals will frequently be made to the Legislature, and the interference of the Legislature, when obtained, will generally prove mischievous to the great interests of commerce, without giving satisfaction to any of the contending parties. In such instances, however, much good may be done by wise and diligent Ministers, who think it their duty to watch, to inquire, and fully to inform themselves. Prejudices may be removed, mistakes may be exposed, and sometimes useful regulations may be introduced. This remark has been suggested by the present circumstances of

Ireland : it has been already hinted, that she aims at more than her capital can possibly support, or in which she can possibly succeed : some of her people have been ignorantly eager in professing an unfriendly disposition to British manufactures, and perhaps persuade themselves, that under the term “ Protecting Duties \*,” they can conceal their real meaning — the introduction of a plan of prohibitory duties. Happily, a considerable proportion of the country thinks differently ; and her Parliament, after a full investigation, rejected the measure, by a great majority. Yet, many still retain the disposition to occupy themselves, and disturb others, with attempts to introduce the mischievous system. A war of protecting duties and bounties, would answer to neither country ; it would be extremely prejudicial to both ; it would be ruinous to Ireland. The duty proposed would be prohibitory. If Ireland prohibits the staple manufacture of Great Britain, measures of a similar tendency would inevitably

\* The duties proposed were so high as to be prohibitory of British, and therefore protecting Irish woollens.

## 8 PROTECTING DUTIES.

and soon take place, respecting the staple manufacture of Ireland. Even by doing much less, the great article of trade, on which Ireland depends, her linen manufacture, would be ruined ; merely the placing Irish linens on the same footing as foreign, would almost entirely prevent the use of them in England, and be ten times more prejudicial to Ireland, than her prohibition of English woollens would be to Great Britain. Measures, too, might be pursued in that line, which would forward and assist the interests of Great Britain, in the north of Europe.

But while prohibitory duties might bring real evils on Ireland, they would fail of answering the end intended : they encourage contraband trade ; and no laws could prevent the smuggling of British manufactures into Ireland : the near neighbourhood and great intercourse give a facility, which could not be obviated ; nor could non - importation agreements last long. . Ireland would soon be tired of the impositions of her own manufacturers, who would immediately avail themselves of the opportunity, and who have raised the clamour for the purpose of



VALUE of all Commodities exported from Ireland to Britain for Ten Years, ending the 25th of 1783, distinguishing each Year, and the separate Value of Linens, Linen Yarn, Wool, Worsted, and

of Linen.		Linen Yarn.		Wool.		Worsted and Bay Yarn.		Total of the Foregoing Articles.		Other Articles exported to Britain from Ireland.		Total Exports to Britain.	
s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	£.	s.	£.	d.
121	11	0	175	166	0	0	0	503	11	7 $\frac{1}{2}$	18	211	3849
543	15	0	183	592	15	0	0	1003	12	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	13	237	6517
110	16	4	216	915	5	0	0	529	14	14 $\frac{1}{2}$	10	254	7460
584	5	5	178	199	0	0	0	867	6	6 $\frac{1}{2}$	5	254	7132
748	13	1	168	653	0	0	0	832	12	3	5	271	2492
043	4	0	214	020	10	0	0	1939	5	5 $\frac{1}{2}$	5	225	2976
921	0	0	254	219	15	0	0	1082	7	7	12	238	1234
455	13	4	223	215	0	0	0	552	7	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	7	218	0215
138	2	8	169	126	10	0	0	1482	8	9	13	269	9825
197	18	0	214	877	13	0	0	1031	10	11 $\frac{1}{2}$	16	198	9290

exacting an additional profit from the consumer; she would soon find she cannot supply herself, and that efforts which may fall heavily on her in other respects, will serve her in no respect; but would greatly raise the price to her people of that essentially necessary article, cloathing.

Those who examine with a jealous eye the advantages resulting to Great Britain from her supplying Ireland with certain articles, should observe the prodigious quantity of linen with which Ireland supplies Great Britain; the value of which, in the year ending the 25th of March, 1782, exceeded all the imports into Ireland of the growth, produce, and manufacture of Great Britain: it amounted to 24,692,072 yards, value 1,646,138l. 2s. 8d. Irish money\*; besides

\* See the table No. I. The author inadvertently took the year of the greatest export; but the average of four years, ending the 25th of March, 1778, and previous to the exports of Ireland being hurt by her non-importation agreements, (which they were) was in value 1,455,999l. 7s. 5½d. In consequence of those agreements, and other circumstances, the value of linen ex-



## 10 PROTECTING DUTIES.

fides linen yarn, to the amount of 169,126l. 10s. In the same year, all the imports into Ireland, of the produce and manufacture of Great Britain, amounted to 1,486,317l. 2s. 4d.; of which the quantity and value of woollens was as follows, and it happened to be the year of the greatest import :

	Yards.		£.	s.	d.
Old drapery, -	362,824	- Value	253,976	0	0
New drapery, -	547,336	- —	68,417	0	0
			322,393	0	0

And it is farther worthy of notice, that, in the same year, when Ireland exported

	Yards.		£.	s.	d.
To Britain - -	24,692,072	value	1,646,138	2	8
She exported to all the rest of the world only - -	278,231	—	18,548	14	8
And coloured linens	113,655½	—	5,984	9	9
Total export -	25,083,958½				

ports fell, in 1781, to 961,455l. The next year, 1782, however, as usually happens on such occasions, it increased, and to the great amount above mentioned.

## PROTECTING DUTIES. 11

Moreover it may be observed, that Ireland does not grow a sufficiency of wool of a proper sort, if she should manufacture the whole of it, to supply her own consumption of woollens ; and that she could not get the same articles cheaper from any other country than from Great Britain. At the same time, a great proportion of the linens which Great Britain takes from Ireland might be got cheaper from the north of Europe : and Ireland should remember, that, of all her exports in the same year, viz. 1782, Britain alone took 2,699,825*l.* 13*s.* 8½*d.* How trifling, comparatively, the remainder of her exports, will appear under the head of her general trade.

The year 1783 was not exactly the period when we should have expected the woollen manufacturers of Ireland to be most clamorous, and that they should enter upon the most violent measures. Unprejudiced people, at least, will think that the complaints were ill timed ; and the following account of the exports of woollens\* will prove it. It

\* Exclusive of frize, flannels, stockings, and mixtures of woollens, and hats.

## 12 PROTECTING DUTIES.

*Should be remarked, that the export was allowed only during a small part of the year 1780.*

Old drapery exported from Ireland, year ending the 25th of March,

		Yards.
1780	—	494
1781	—	3,740
1782	—	4,633
1783	—	40,589

New drapery exported from Ireland, year ending the 25th of March,

		Yards.
1780	—	8,653
1781	—	286,859
1782	—	336,607
1783	—	538,061

And as a farther proof of the increase of the woollen manufacture in Ireland, it appears that the export of wool, woollen, and worsted yarn had decreased above half. The average export of the last, which is the principal article, for seven years, ending the 25th of March, 1770, was 142,890 stones. The average of the same number

of

## PROTECTING DUTIES. 13

of years, ending the 25th of March, 1783, was 66,679 stones.

It should be remarked, that at the time Ireland, on the opening of her ports for exportation of woollens, made an effort to send the above quantity to foreign markets, she increased her imports of woollens. This helps to shew an advantage in taking away that unreasonable restraint, and should convince us, that the more Ireland exports, the greater her necessity will be of importing from England. Ireland was enabled to work up her wool in those articles which best suited it, and to the greatest advantage, for foreign markets, instead of employing it to disadvantage, and increased the importation of such woollen articles as England could furnish cheaper than she could make them.

On an average of four years, from 1763 to 1767, Ireland imported,

		Yards.
New drapery,	-	281,557
Old drapery,	-	196,047

On

## 14 PROTECTING DUTIES.

On an average of four years, ending the 25th of March, 1783, Ireland imported,

Yards.

New drapery, - 390,095

Old drapery, - 281,406

But the increase of the importation of the principal article, new drapery, was only about one fifth of the increased manufacture for exportation.

Yards.

Increased quantity of new drapery

imported, - - - 108,538

New drapery exported, year ending

the 25th of March, 1783, - 538,061

And the export of the latter article, the same year, exceeded the import near 120,000 yards. And farther it should be remarked, that, in the very year when so large a quantity of Irish woollens were able to meet British at foreign market, a duty was asked on British to enable Irish woollens to meet them at the markets of Ireland.

It should be observed, however, that the manufacture of woollens was not so much increased as appears from the stated export of the four last years: a certain proportion

of those articles, which now appear in the exports, were smuggled from Ireland previous to 1778, at which time the prohibition to export was taken off with respect to the British plantations in America, or the West Indies, or any British settlement on the coast of Africa. Before that time, woollens could not be mentioned in the Custom-house state of the exports of Ireland; but now that the export is opened to all the world, by the acts of 1780 and 1781, it is found that two thirds of her woollens go to Portugal, to which place she probably sent nearly as much before. The importation, however, of most of those articles into Portugal, both then and now, was, and is, supposed to be prohibited by Portugal: and it should farther be remarked, that as woollens are not subject to duties on export, the vanity, and other motives of merchants may have induced them to enter greater quantities for exportation than they have really sent.

But some of the violent *friends* of Ireland say, we will have non-importation agreements, protecting duties, prohibitions, &c.

If

## 16 PROTECTING DUTIES.

If you don't take our linens, we will not only refuse British, but also foreign and colonial commodities from Great Britain, and the two last amount to near 800,000*l.* yearly\*.

It will be answered, that Great Britain gives to the principal manufacture of Ireland every advantage in every part of her dominions, and may most reasonably expect that her own principal manufacture should, in return, have equal advantages in Ireland, which they have not. The linens Great Britain takes from Ireland are five times the value of

\* Some of these pretended friends of Ireland, who, whether actuated by an honest and zealous ignorance, or by worse motives, are likely to prove her greatest enemies, have been driven, by the absurdity of their pretension, into the most contradictory mode of reasoning: for, on some occasions, they treat as a separate kingdom, not only independent, but utterly unconnected; on others, they claim as a part of the empire, entitled (according to an inauspicious phrase) to a reciprocity of equal rights. For the sake of fairness in argument, it is to be wished they would chuse one predication or the other. The attempt to blend both characters, is not calculated to promote either candour or perspicuity.

the

the woollens taken from Britain. Ireland takes nothing from her that she can get cheaper or better elsewhere, except the commodities of the British West Indies; and, in return, she has an advantage in her share of the monopoly of the West-India markets, and she has no pretension to trade with the plantations on any other principle. Whatever else she takes of colonial or foreign articles, is for her own convenience; and before Ireland cuts off all commercial intercourse with Great Britain, it may be worth her while to consider the proportion of the exports of Ireland taken by Great Britain, as already mentioned: it will appear that her exports to all other parts did not, in the same year, much exceed, in value, the twentieth part of her exports to Britain, and in that part are included the exports to the British plantations, which would be found no small part, but which would be also lost, as such proceedings on the part of Ireland would naturally tend to interrupt all commercial intercourse with the British colonies and empire. Great Britain has found it possible to exist, and to maintain, her commercial affluence against the combinations and inter-

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ruptions



ruptions of many principal markets in both Continents; but Ireland has not yet made the experiment, how she could exist without the markets of the British dominions: and when Ireland shall be so madly advised, neither fleets nor armies, nor any extraordinary expence, will be necessary, on the part of Great Britain, to convince her she is wrong: hurtful it may be for a time; but in the end, and soon, Great Britain must prevail: Ireland cannot: for it does not appear where she will get what she wants, and that she has credit with other nations to the amount she would require; or where she will dispose of what she has, if she should have no intercourse with Great Britain or the British colonies. It will be found, that it is the intercourse with the British dominions that enables Ireland to trade in any considerable degree.

This hostile mode of argument is, however, very improperly brought on by Ireland. It would ill become either kingdom to encourage even the discussion of such propositions; and the seat of empire could never adopt the measures hinted at, unless  
unavoidably

unavoidably driven to them. Under the present enlarged and free system of commerce, there is demand and trade enough in the world to occupy the utmost industry of both countries. This kind of scrutiny, then, should not take place; but if Ireland will force it forwards, the investigation will not prove either beneficial or flattering to her. She might at least be satisfied until she finds herself in the situation of being able to say to Britain, My ports shall be open to all your manufactures, free of all duties, on condition that your ports shall be open to mine in the like manner. — Ireland is hardly in the situation to agree to that proposal; and the generality of Englishmen would probably at first object: but there is nothing in it which should alarm them. Great Britain could undersell Ireland in most manufactures: such is the predominancy of superior skill, industry, and capital, over low-priced labour, and comparatively very few taxes. — Many would object to the extension of this idea to raw materials, as well as to manufactures; but even the permitting English wool and fullers' earth, charged with inland carriage, freight, com-

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mission,

mission, &c. to go to Ireland, need not alarm, on the ground of giving a superiority to the latter\*. Let it be remembered, that England undersells other countries even in the manufacture of Spanish wool. The wool grower in England, who submits the monopoly of his wool to the manufacturers,

\* The English woollen manufacturers will say, the export of wool from England to Ireland must greatly reduce the price of wool in the latter country, and, with the low price of labour, enable the Irish manufacturers to undersell them, and of course will urge the same objections as they do, to the export of wool to France. On the other hand, the wool growers of Ireland will oppose the reduction of the price, which is from 3s. to 4s. per stone higher than in England: and it is said, until mutton becomes a more common food in Ireland, and the price consequently rises, it would not answer to keep up the present number of sheep, if not encouraged by the high price of wool. The increase of tillage in that country, it is supposed, will naturally decrease the number of sheep, unless, by a mode of agriculture superior to the present, and a more general introduction of artificial grasses, turneps, &c. she should be enabled to keep a greater stock. Yet the following account of the great fair of Ballinasloe, in Connaught, seems to prove that the number of sheep was increasing in Ireland. Tillage, however, has made, comparatively, very little progress in that part of the kingdom. .

## PROTECTING DUTIES. 21

turers, might receive some relief. This, however, is a nice point, and does not require any discussion at present.

ABSTRACT of WOOL sold at the different Fairs of Bal-  
linasloe, from July, 1771, to July, 1778, inclusive.

Date.	No. of Bags fold.	No. of do. unfold.	Total.
1771, July, —	1492	15	1507
1772, —, —	1286	11	1297
1773, —, —	1550	33	1583
1774, —, —	1623	25	1648
1775, —, —	1574	61	1635
1776, —, —	1857	64	1921
1777, —, —	2004	70	2074
1778, —, —	1359	553	1912
Total No. —	12745	832	13577
Yearly average	1593	104	1697

N. B. The failure in 1778 arose from the stagnation of credit, and a decrease of the demand for bay yarn from England.

S H E E P sold at the said Fair.

Date.	fold.	unfold.	Total.
1771, Oct. —	51950	—	51950
1772, —, —	53632	50	53682
1773, —, —	55242	6390	61682
1774, —, —	60796	5302	66633
1775, —, —	63904	1020	64924
1776, —, —	66873	639	67512
1777, —, —	63792	12743	76535
1778, —, —	44894	31588	76482

## E Q U A L D U T I E S.

Instead of protecting or prohibitory duties, which would not answer the purpose of the promoters of them ; or an entire removal of all duties between the two countries, for which, it has been already observed, Ireland is not yet ripe ; perhaps to lower the British inoperative duties to the Irish, would be the least exceptionable measure : it would leave the trade nearly on its present footing ; and it is the interest of the British manufacturers that the duties should be equalized, rather by lowering them here, than by raising them in Ireland.

To this many of the English woollen manufacturers would object : but if Great Britain should take off the heavy duties on the importation of Irish woollens into Britain, it would not be of the advantage to Ireland that she imagines, nor a material check to the British manufacturers of wool. On the part of England and Scotland, it may be worth while to consider, that lowering high duties to the scale of the Irish, while it will take away the arguments, and may

suppress the clamours of the discontented in Ireland, cannot hurt their own manufactures. The heavy duties on the importation of Irish manufactures into Great Britain are prohibitory : they are in general unnecessary ; and only serve to irritate and keep alive prejudice and false notions. For while Great Britain can undersell Ireland, even in the home markets of the latter, in almost every manufacture, charged with land carriage in Britain, freight, duties on landing, and commission ; and notwithstanding the bounties given by the Dublin Society, or Parliament ; Ireland surely could not sell any quantity of manufactures at British markets, or much more to foreign countries, than she does now. She may, indeed, be able to export, in the course of trade, and to assort in cargoes, to a certain extent, some articles which she cannot make cheaper than England, but not in quantities to prejudice the latter. Perhaps, one of the strongest objections at present to opening the British markets to the Irish manufactures, is the danger of smuggling cargoes from the Continent of Europe.

Ireland, it is said, can afford some broad stuffs, durants, shalloons, and shags, cheaper

than Great Britain : her flannels are as good, if not the best : her blankets are as cheap : and in hair plush and druggets, she can rival France : but, if it be true, *she has not a sufficiency of wool to carry those manufactures to any great extent.* The very price of that article, which is generally 3s. or 4s. at least per stone of 16 pounds higher than in England, as already mentioned, must prevent her ; for it was the low price of labour alone which enabled Ireland to send woollen or worsted yarn to Britain \*.

It is, therefore, really the superior quality and cheapness of British manufacture, that prevents import from Ireland. Mr. Arthur Young has inquired, why give in linen what you deny in other fabrics ? Irish linen has all the advantages of a freedom from a great variety of excises, which the manufacturers of English linen labour under, and yet the English manufacture, so burthened, thrives, from there being a difference in the fabrics, and as great a difference would be in other fabrics. The fixed trade, capital,

\* It appears from the Table, No. I. that the quantity of wool she sent was trifling.

and skill of England, at present at least, bid defiance to the no excises of Ireland. If Ireland cannot meet English manufactures in *her own markets, notwithstanding her advantages at home, how can she meet England to any great extent at foreign markets, without those advantages.* New fabrics require new capitals, new establishments, and new exertions.

Taking the year of the greatest export of woollens from Ireland, viz. 1783, we find, the quantity of wool, woollen and worsted yarn exported, greatly decreased, and that the whole quantity of wool exported, was - - 2063 stones, 10 lbs. and the whole quantity

of woollen yarn, - 440 stones.

worsted yarn, - 66677 stones.

It is clear, that even if these quantities had been of the sort of wool fit for making the woollens that Ireland imports, it would not have been sufficient; for, in the same year she imported near 800,000 yards, viz.

	Yards.
New drapery, -	420,415½
Old drapery, -	371,871



and until Ireland becomes a country of shepherds, and prefers sheep-walks to tillage, and depopulation to population, she cannot import much less. She has grown rich, and more populous; her demand for woollens has increased, and is likely to increase much more: Great Britain, therefore, has little to apprehend; but the consumer in Ireland must pay whatever additional expence is thrown on woollens imported; he must pay the extraordinary expence of smuggling, or whatever duty may be laid.

Equal duties must be low; if high, they would be protecting or prohibitory duties against England. It is obvious, that whatever they are, they must fall on the consumer in Ireland, who must have these articles in some shape.

As to the system of no duties in either country, if that should be proposed, Ireland will dread the extinction of some of her present manufactures of woollen. She will recollect the effect of the Methuen treaty with Portugal, by which British woollens were introduced, and the Portuguese manu-

*factures of wool, which had been established above twenty years before, were crushed; or although that treaty, on the face of it, appears simple, and the principles of it not reciprocal \*, its object was as now stated; it was understood so at the time, and it succeeded. The conduct, however, of Portugal was not impolitic. It was not possible for her to carry her woollen manufacture to any great extent, or nearly to supply her people and colonies. She got a great advantage, as to her wines, by the treaty; and her people were supplied cheaper with the necessary article, woollens.*

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Ireland, perhaps, had better be content to remain as she is: her duties on her imports, which are 5 per cent. on the custom rate, and 5 per cent. more on the rate for import excise, give advantage to her own manufactures. Her import duties consist of customs payable like the British, and also of an

\* British woollens were not to be admitted on better terms than those of other countries, although the wines of Portugal were to pay in England lower duties than any other wines,

excise, called import excise, which is bondable until the goods are taken out for consumption, when it is to be paid, and has therefore got the name of excise. Draperies, however, from Britain, do not pay the import excise, only the custom.

The manufactures of wool certainly have increased, and are increasing, under their present circumstances ; and a sufficient quantity is manufactured, to shew that extraordinary measures are not necessary. The clamour on this subject has been nearly confined to Dublin, the most improper place for the manufacture, and where it is much to be wished it may not flourish ; where a disposition has appeared rather to riot and insult the Legislature, than to cultivate, with industry, the benefits of an enlarged and free commerce. The seat of expence and licentiousness is not a fit place for the principal branch of the woollen manufacture, or for any other, except slight fabrics, which depend upon changeable fashion, and must be under the eye of the shopkeeper.

A good

A good deal has been already said, relative to woollens, which applies to the general requisition from Ireland, that the manufactures of both countries shall be liable to equal duties on import into each other. The British duties, when compared with the Irish, will not, by any means, give to an indifferent person the impression of fairness and equality, or even of utility ; they have, however, in truth, little or no effect, except to cause uneasiness, to irritate, and seemingly to justify the idea of protecting duties. Whilst similar British commodities command the markets of Ireland, from their superior quality and cheapness, though charged with the Irish duties, what chance of sale have the same articles of Irish manufacture at British markets, even without a duty ? An alteration, therefore, would benefit Ireland, or prejudice Britain, much less than is imagined. This argument, perhaps, it will be said, may answer for the year 1785, but may not apply to the probable future state of manufactures in Ireland in 1800—that the progress of manufactures in the two countries, one of which pays taxes, to the amount of fourteen millions, and the other

## EQUAL DUTIES.

one million only, little or no part of which can be said to fall on manufactures, is not likely to keep an equal pace. To which it may be replied, that the price of labour, and expences of all kinds, will undoubtedly increase with the increase of manufactures in Ireland; that one million of axes is less disproportionate to the wealth of that country, than may appear to those who have not examined their comparative riches, and that if Great Britain makes no improper sacrifices, she will maintain her present superiority. It merits, therefore, the consideration of the British manufacturers, whether the sale of their goods will not be much more hurt by the dissatisfaction of Ireland, and non-importation agreements, (although the latter will not be effectual or lasting) than by a reduction of the duties on the import of Irish manufactures. The duty on woollens, imported into Britain from Ireland, amount to a prohibition. At the same time Ireland has laid duties equal to a prohibition in favour of England, on draperies from all other countries; they are also in favour of her own woollen manufacture.

## SCHEDULE of DUTIES on the under-men- tioned Articles in both Countries.

Import Duties payable in Britain.				Import Duties payable in Ireland.		
£.	s.	d.		£.	s.	d.
2	0	6 $\frac{4}{5}$	{ All woollens or old drapery, per yard, — — — — }	0	0	5 $\frac{10}{16}$
0	5	11 $\frac{10}{16}$	{ Stuffs of all kinds, made or mixed with wool, or new drapery, per yard, — — — — }	0	0	1 $\frac{10}{16}$
29	15	10	{ Cotton and linen manufactures, and cotton mixed, for every 100l. value, on oath, — — }	9	18	5 $\frac{8}{16}$
65	10	10	{ Linen cloth, printed, for every 100l. value, on oath, — — }	9	18	5 $\frac{8}{16}$
65	10	10	{ Leather manufactures, for every 100l. value, on oath, — — }	9	18	5 $\frac{8}{16}$
9	3	11 $\frac{13}{16}$	{ Checks, the piece not above 10 yards, besides in Britain, for every 100l. value, on oath, }	0	1	3 $\frac{17}{16}$
35	15	0				
5	6	9 $\frac{10}{16}$	Sugar, refined, per cwt. — —	1	13	11 $\frac{12}{16}$
4	12	1 $\frac{17}{16}$	Starch, per cwt. — — —	0	6	5 $\frac{12}{16}$

Many other instances might be added, not less remarkable : and Ireland does not a little complain of want of reciprocity on the subjects of malt, beer, &c.

Average

Average of three years, ending Christmas 1777, of the duties arising on all goods and merchandize exported from England into Ireland :

		£.	s.	d.
British goods,	-	9136	16	8 $\frac{1}{4}$
Foreign goods,	-	719	18	5 $\frac{1}{4}$

Average of the same years of the duties arising on all goods, &c. imported from Ireland into England, - £. 6490 11 1 $\frac{1}{2}$

Average of three years, ending the 5th of January, 1778, of the duties arising on all goods, &c. exported from Scotland into Ireland, - - - £. 602 0 7 $\frac{1}{4}$

Average of the same years of the duties arising on all goods, &c. imported from Ireland into Scotland, - £. 585 13 1  
It may be observed, that the larger sum is received in that country, where the markets in general are open to the other upon low duties, and that the balance of the general interchange is in favour of Ireland.

## BOUNTIES.

As to bounties, Ireland complains of that given by Great Britain on the export of fail cloth to Ireland; she finds it extremely hurtful to her fabric, and complains with double force, as it is a branch of her linen manufacture. She will be justifiable in counteracting, by duties or regulations, all bounties given on export to Ireland, where she has similar manufactures: but the British act adds to the bounty now given, as much more as at any time Ireland shall impose as a duty on the import of British fail cloth into Ireland. The mode of contest may become ridiculous.

## DRAWBACKS.

As to drawbacks, it is desired that Great Britain shall allow a full drawback on all commodities she exports to Ireland, on the principle, that the country which consumes the article, should have the use of the revenue raised upon it. Refined sugar and hops are

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put



put on that footing. It is not unreasonable, and it is encouraging to trade. It should always be remembered, that whatever part of a duty is not drawn back, is a tax on the carrying trade.

## NAVIGATION ACT,

*Colonial and Foreign* COMMODITIES, &c.

Exclusive of the several difficulties respecting the interchange of native commodities and manufactures, new pretensions are brought forward, relative to the commerce resulting from the intercourse, which has been opened to Ireland, with the British Colonies, Plantations, and Settlements, and also relative to the interchange of Asiatic, African, and American produce. Ireland desires that the construction of the navigation laws may be altered, so as to admit Colonial and foreign commodities from her warehouses into Great Britain, in like manner as they pass from thence into Ireland.

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The objections to this, on the part of the people of Great Britain, are numerous and strong. It is said, that the advantage in question is the only one she has reserved to herself, as head of the empire, for the vast expence of supporting foreign connections, establishing, maintaining, and protecting colonies, which alone belong to her; that when she gave the participation of all other advantages, she reserved this alone; which if she yields, there are few other points in which the navigation laws will be of service to her, relatively to Ireland. It is the only commercial part of them that is of consequence; it is the single privilege, which leaves any gleam of hope to Great Britain, that she shall weather the consequences of the war, to which Ireland contributes nothing. In fact, the very operation in question of the navigation laws, is the only barrier remaining against the migration of her manufacturers and merchants. The preamble of her navigation and other laws, give the reasons for confining Colonial and foreign trade, viz.

“ Not only for the sake of employing and  
 “ increasing English shipping and seamen,  
 “ and securing a vent for woollen and other

“ manufactures ; but also to make this king-  
 “ dom a staple of the commodities of those  
 “ plantations, as well as of the commodities  
 “ of other countries for the supplying them ;  
 “ (it being the usage of other nations to  
 “ keep their plantation trade to themselves)  
 “ and farther, if Colonial commodities  
 “ should be taken from any part but the  
 “ plantations, that the trade of them would  
 “ thereby in a great measure be diverted  
 “ from hence, and carried elsewhere ; His  
 “ Majesty’s customs and other revenues  
 “ much lessened, the fair trader prejudiced,  
 “ and this kingdom not continue a staple  
 “ of plantation commodities, nor that vent  
 “ for the future of the victual and other  
 “ native commodities of this kingdom.”—

Such was the declared principle of the navigation act \*, and such certainly was the principle of those acts † which passed explanatory of it ; and the act which repeals so much of the navigation laws, as prevented a direct

\* 12th Charles II.

† 15th Charles II. and the 22d and 23d Charles II. confirms the intention of the 15th, to prohibit importation of, &c. from Ireland, and restrain it to Britain.

intercourse between Ireland and the British plantations, does not repeal the 12th Geo. III. chap. 55. \* which prohibits the import from Ireland into Britain, of rum, sugar, coffee, and other American and Asiatic goods : nor can it be said, that it appears from the act, which extended the trade of Ireland, to have been the intention of the Legislature to make any alteration in that respect. The custom-house practice has continued the same since, as it was before the passing the act, and during upwards of a century, viz. not to admit the articles in question from Ireland. Nor can it be objected as inequitable, that Britain declines to take from Ireland commodities which that country takes from her. Ireland takes them from the mother country of the colonies ; and, strictly considering the matter, she has no rightful claim to get them

\* Although this act was passed to bind both countries, and those parts which purport to have an internal operation in the levying of forfeitures or penalties, or are directory to the officers of the Irish revenue, may now be considered as a dead letter ; yet, the spirit and intention of this act is clear, and that part which was intended to bind Britain, and which prohibits importation of the produce of Asia, Africa, and America, from Ireland, is still in force.

in any other way from any colonies, except through the indulgence of the mother country of those colonies. Ireland takes little from Britain of any kind, that she can get cheaper elsewhere : she takes as it suits her, and she cannot object to Britain the price she pays for West-India commodities, or the giving the monopoly of her markets to the produce of the British plantations, as in return she has her share of the monopoly of their markets. It would be an extreme folly in Great Britain to maintain settlements at an immense expence of public money, and to confine herself to the purchase of their produce at an unreasonable price, and to the private detriment of individual consumers, and then to put it in the power of another country to purchase, with the manufactures of that country, the produce of such settlements, and to retail them afterwards in the British market. The mischiefs connected with that point alone are too obvious to be insisted on. It is farther to be observed, that trade is of so delicate a nature, that it is almost impossible to conjecture, how restraints either laid on, or taken off, will operate—that it is prudent to apprehend every evil, of  
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which there is any probability, however distant—to fear the effect of a concession, the whole extent of which it is at least difficult to foresee—and that it is unnecessary to risk the consequences of the measure in question. The maintainers of these objections will add, that Great Britain was greatly benefited by being the depot of American, Asiatic, and African produce; and she has reason to expect, that she will still be so in a very considerable degree. The mere mercantile gain is an inconsiderable object, when compared with the various advantages of the exchange of commodities; with the value and quantity of industry, which the above system of trade diffuses throughout the community; with the employment given to an incredible number of people; with the various expences incurred from the time of the arrival, until the re-exportation of the commodities, in landing, storing, assorting, re-packing, portage, re-shipping, &c.; but above all, the increase of shipping, and of seamen. The value of trade is best ascertained by the quantity of employment and maintenance given to the industrious part of the community. In short, it would be entering into a wide field,

field, to enumerate the various advantages which centered in this country, in consequence of the trade in question; besides the great object of freight, which is just as much a part of commerce as import and export. It cannot, therefore, be expected, that Great Britain should create and establish a dangerous competition for objects of such essential importance to her; and in a country, which has peculiar advantages, from situation and other circumstances, which she herself has not. It is highly proper, that Great Britain should encourage the manufactures and other trade of Ireland: but there is great difference between such conduct and changing her whole commercial and colonial system; encouraging the migration of men, capitals, and trade, with their mercantile knowledge, their steadiness of exertion, their industry, and talents for commerce, to produce an unequal competition against herself. Ireland has her advantages—let her enjoy them: Great Britain will readily adopt and promote any measure, by which she can benefit Ireland, without materially injuring herself: but she cannot reasonably be expected to embrace measures tending to divert the colonial trade, and to tear  
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from her own merchants, and from her own people, all the beneficial security of an important branch of trade, which so peculiarly belongs to her ; of which only she has made any reserve or exception ; and on which her continuing to be the staple for colonial and foreign articles depends, and also her naval strength, her population, revenue, and public credit : — She has entirely relaxed all navigation and colonial principles in favour of Ireland, except the point in question. She communicated every other advantage of import and export of colonial articles to the sister kingdom ; but wisely abstained from giving the power of importing them from Ireland into her own market. She has given to Ireland, the liberty of supplying herself, and any part of the world that will admit Irish vessels, with the produce of the British colonies ; and it is surely very unreasonable that she should not be allowed the exclusive right of supplying herself with her own colonial produce. She cannot, therefore, without being regardless of her essential interests, promote still farther the export of colonial articles from Ireland, and encourage the Irish, or, rather, the British

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merchants,



merchants, who would gradually remove their capitals, to speculate largely to her disadvantage : and unless Great Britain should yield the advantage in question, and thereby furnish a new and near market, it will not answer to Ireland to speculate considerably in articles for which she has not ready and certain customers. She will fear a superfluity ; and instead of being a dangerous competitor with Great Britain in the trade in question, she will not very speedily import a sufficiency even for her own demand and consumption. If Ireland could become the entrepôt, in a considerable degree, for Europe, which would naturally happen, if allowed for Great Britain, she would get possession of those articles, and those advantages, which would supply capital : — She would have the capitals and credit of other countries to surpass the mother country ; and as there would be then no difficulty in importing into this country from Ireland, whenever the market suited, the merchants of Britain would be encouraged to avail themselves of the peculiar situation of Ireland, to carry on the whole of their re-export trade through that country, and they  
would

would find means of supplying three fourths, perhaps, of their cargoes from thence. They would fix houses in Ireland, transmit capitals, and, by degrees, migrate thither themselves. The tobacco trade would inevitably settle in Ireland. The towns that have the re-export trade in Great Britain will loudly complain; and Glasgow, Liverpool, Bristol, &c. will foresee and feel the approaching loss of their present local and other advantages. Such are the speculations of Ireland in forming the present requisitions! Her object is to become the mart in Europe for the trade of America, for which she is so well suited by her western situation, immediately open to the ocean, and accessible almost with every wind; her vessels often crossing the Atlantic in a shorter time than the shipping of London require to clear the Channel. In addition, her ships can be victualled infinitely cheaper; and every necessary of life being low, as well as public taxes, the general charge of conducting trade will be proportionably less. In considering this matter, we should look forward to the period when Ireland shall have

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attained a much more significant commercial situation than her present, and be able to trade on as good a footing to the western world as England. She would, from her situation and advantages, supply Great Britain with American produce — The gain of Ireland, by such a measure, can result only from the loss of Great Britain.

Some farther observations, perhaps, are worthy the attention of the British merchant, the colonial proprietor, and the ostensible servants of the Crown. The two first classes, as respecting themselves; the latter, as having a reference to the Public. The vast sums that are due from the Colonies to the merchants of Great Britain, surely should be considered. That this extensive credit was given on the strength of laws now subsisting, and which have hitherto been deemed as part of the colonial constitution. — That any material deviation may destroy that confidence which their immediate and exclusive connection with this country has inspired, the basis on which their credit has hitherto been built, and the

the best security to this country for the payment of their debts.

The planters, or colonial proprietors, should also be induced to reflect on the consequences of any innovation, should it appear, that, as Ireland may import many of the articles which are produced in our colonies from other countries, some of those articles may, through that medium, be clandestinely introduced into Great Britain, and thereby deprive them of the very great advantage they now derive from the exclusive supply of this country. Besides, it may be suggested, that if any regulations take place, which tend to lessen the security of the creditor, that the merchants of Britain will immediately call in their debts, and in future refuse lending such sums as they have heretofore done; which is so essential to the welfare and prosperity of the Colonies, that it is the event which, of all others, they ought most to dread. So far the interest of individuals, or rather of some particular bodies of men may be affected, should the import of colonial and foreign articles be allowed into England from Ireland.

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In the important article of Revenue, great consequences also are to be expected ; which, though interesting to every person, applies more immediately to those servants of the Crown who have the direction of the public treasure, and whose duty it is to find equitable and adequate supplies for the exigencies of the State. These official servants of the public should reflect seriously on the consequences which may accrue from the enormous frauds that may be introduced by this means, to the detriment of so interesting a branch of national resource, as the import duties on tobacco, wines, rum, and many other articles. Notwithstanding all the regulations and restrictions which can be devised, it may in a great measure counteract those useful and beneficial arrangements, which have lately been made for the prevention of smuggling ; and which, we are told from the highest authority, have succeeded so well. Should such an alteration take place, it will hold out every encouragement for the revival of that baneful and destructive mode of traffic. As the duties on the importation of most articles are much higher in England than in Ireland, it will induce the fraudulent trader

to run the risque of introducing them into this country, more particularly, as the proximity of the two islands, and the number of ports constantly open to them, will afford every convenience they can wish, either as to forming deposits for their goods, or the readiest means of bringing them over hither.

One other circumstance it may likewise be necessary to mention, as being more favourable to the smugglers than any thing they have ever yet experienced, namely, the security they will derive from an exemption from seizure, unless they happen to be taken in the act of landing their goods ; which is not very probable, on so wide and extensive a coast : for in that case, their vessels will be permitted, in the ports of Ireland, to clear out for Great Britain, with those articles on board ; and of course, being admissible here, they will be exempt from seizure on their whole passage, as well as on their approaching the coast, even in the Thames, protected by clearances ; and should they be so closely watched at any time as not to have an opportunity of landing their goods clandestinely,

or,

or, in the event of bad weather, being obliged to seek the shelter of some British harbour; in either of these cases they will remain secure, and can always save their vessels and cargoes by bringing them to an entry, and paying the duty on those particular goods, so that, in the event most unfavourable to them, they will be on a par with the fair trader.

The construction of the Navigation laws now contended for, is, perhaps, the only point in which the interests of the two countries seem separate and distinct; and if Ireland did not expect great benefit, she would not so strenuously urge the claim; but this given up, England could not pretend to a competition with her in time to come. The matter in question indeed seems so self evident, that no man of the least commercial knowledge, who has talents or abilities to form an accurate idea on the subject, can hesitate in declaring the measure a blow, perhaps, but certain poison, to the commerce, manufactures, and population of Great Britain. In short, it is not the business of Great Britain to encourage the mi-  
gration

gration of her merchants and people to situations of greater convenience, where all the articles of trade and manufactures are so completely unburdened. England in half a century would find herself more hurt than she has been by all her debts and all her taxes.

The advantage in question, is necessary to counterbalance the advantages of Ireland, and preserve an equality with her. The burdens of the country, and, above all, the taxes on the inland and foreign commerce, sufficiently counterbalance all local advantages which arise from the habits, and the manners of Great Britain. It is essential, that the capitals and trade of the empire should not center in that part which does not contribute to the expences of it. The point in question would give to Ireland all the advantages of an union, without her taking upon her, any of the disadvantages. Ireland does not at present dispute in which of the countries the seat of empire shall be ; but that question would be as reasonable, and not of more consequence than the present. The affectation of saying that



it is a point of no consequence, but that it will quiet Ireland, can only mislead the most ignorant or the most thoughtless. We do not in general observe, that malecontents, or people dissatisfied with or without reason, are apt to be quieted by unsubstantial favours. Ireland, indeed, has not been satisfied with great concessions. But if it were in truth a point of no consequence, those who urge it, are endeavouring to deceive the people of Ireland, and to prevail upon Great Britain to be accessory to the deceit. If it were in truth an unsubstantial favour, those who state it as such will cheerfully receive the refusal of it. It should not even be admitted, that the point remains to be settled — It is settled — It is a fixed principle, the most necessary to support Britain — It is the foundation on which her prosperity depends.

Besides these general objections, Great Britain has another of no small consequence. In the American and West-India trade, the great difficulty has been, and will be, to obtain payment for merchandize. The principal mode of payment has been, and

must be, by the produce of America and the Islands. If that produce should be admitted into this country through Ireland, much of it will go there in payment for provisions of several kinds, linen, woollens, and various articles of manufactures and cloathing. By so much as Ireland shall take of that produce to re-export into this country or elsewhere, to that amount will England lose of the best, and, in some cases, only mode of payment from America and the Islands; and Ireland, instead of paying England as heretofore, will send those very articles to her, by which alone she could expect to be paid by America for merchandize sent there. Other objections to the expectations of Ireland in this point will arise in multitudes; these are glaring and obvious. The depreciation of landed estates, and the ruin of stockholders, and of public credit, would be among the certain and inevitable consequences of such a concession; and however strong the declaration may appear, it is demonstrable, that an absolute and entire separation of the two countries would be less pernicious to the interests of Britain. If these objections appeared even less solid,

if they were but doubtful, or possibly in some degree founded on prejudice or jealousy, still any Minister would be hardy indeed, who should overlook them. On the other hand, it will be false patriotism to disquiet the two countries on a point, which one is not likely to yield, which the other has no rightful claim to press or insist on; which is not necessary to her, having already more ways of employing her capitals and people, and of growing rich, than she or any country now, or ever is likely to avail itself of; considering at the same time, that great concessions have already been made, and that others are still asked which are more reasonable, and more likely to be obtained, and not so prejudicial to Great Britain.

It is obvious, that the claim in question equally relates to East-India goods; and it has been said in the Parliament of Ireland, that as she gives a monopoly of her consumption to the East-India Company, and takes from her in value to the amount of 350,000l. yearly, which is more than any other country, except Great Britain, she should be sup-

## NAVIGATION ACT, &c.

plied in the same manner, and have equal advantages. The Indiamen should have liberty to land their cargoes in Ireland ; the Company should have warehouses, and attend their customers there. The India goods imported into Ireland, should be warehoused without duty, with a power of exporting to Britain ; a fixed number of outward-bound Indiamen should visit Ireland, and there take their out cargoe, and such manufactures for which there is a demand in Asia, &c. &c. &c.

The answer is, that Ireland has no better claims on the India Company, than she has on any other company of merchants in London ; that she has East-India commodities as cheap, or cheaper, from the Company, than she could have them from any other quarter. She has no better claim to be waited on, and her manufactures taken from her door, than Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Bristol, Quebec, Halifax, &c. The remains of our Norman dominions have an equal right to the same advantages ; and Jersey and Guernsey may equally claim to be waited on, and to see India ships in their ports. The charges of the transport of India goods to the distant

parts of this kingdom, are fully as great as to the ports of Ireland; and the consumers in those distant parts pay heavy duties on these very articles, which go towards the expences of the empire, consequently towards the expence of maintaining the India trade, to which Ireland contributes nothing; for whatever duties are paid by the consumers in Ireland, go to the revenue of that country.

Besides the above, the objections to this claim are generally the same as to the other, for admission of colonial or foreign produce from Ireland: they are not the objections of the Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies, but the objections of the people of Great Britain. — The restraints are as much against the Company as against Ireland; the Company might victual her ships cheaper there, and might have several advantages, by a direct intercourse between her factories and Ireland; but it would be inconsistent with the interest of England, and nearly in the same manner as already shewn on the subject of the other claim.

The Great *Reciprocal* Commercial arrangement between Britain and Ireland, of which we have heard so much, consists, as we have reason to believe, of all, or most, of these expectations on the part of Ireland: how the reciprocity is likely to arise, does not appear; but the American treaty, although not quite so strong a case as this may prove, is the precedent on which to found pretensions. At least, these are the difficulties;—the sooner they are determined the better. Great Britain has to lament at this day, that so many great points have been conceded, without having this material one properly arranged; which, undoubtedly, in the years 1780 and 1782, she might have settled in her own way. We have now only to hope, that ministers will have the wisdom to determine this, and every other point, firmly and decidedly; so that Ireland may settle to industry, and that no commercial question may be again permitted to arise between the countries. Without such resolution, any discussion of the subject would be folly. The whole seems ultimately to rest on the expediency. The people of Great Britain think that Ireland is in the habit of  
making

making successful requisitions, and that Great Britain is in the habit of inconsiderate concessions. The feeble Administrations of England, to avoid the mere difficulty of the day, are fond of expedients. The country has reason to be tired of them; it is time she should support herself; and there is not only more dignity, but policy, in firmness.

E.N D O F P A R T I.

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The Second Part will soon be published.

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A  
L E T T E R  
TO THE  
EARL OF CARLISLE,  
*Ec. Ec.*

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# LETTER

TO THE

## EARL OF CARLISLE,

OCCASIONED BY  
HIS LORDSHIP'S  
REPLY  
TO  
*EARL FITZWILLIAM'S TWO LETTERS:*

EXHIBITING  
THE PRESENT STATE OF PARTIES IN IRELAND—  
VINDICATING THE LATE VICEROY'S ADMINIS-  
TRATION, AND THE CHARACTERS OF THE PER-  
SONS WITH WHOM HE ASSOCIATED IN COUNCIL,  
FROM THE MALEVOLENT ASPERSIONS LEVELLED  
AT THEM—AND DETAILING THE SECRET  
CAUSES WHICH LED TO HIS RECAL.

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Justum et tenacem propositi Virum  
Non Civium ardor prava jubentium,  
Non vultus instantis Tyranni  
Mente quatit solida, ———

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HORACE.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR B. CROSSBY, STATIONERS' COURT, LUDGATE STREET;  
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SELLERS.

1795.



A  
LETTER,  
Ec. Ec.

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*London, May 24, 1795.*

MY LORD,

THE attention of the world has been irresistibly attracted, and the public mind highly interested by the recent publication of some Letters which lately passed between your Lordship and Earl FITZWILLIAM.

But, however the disclosure of a private and confidential correspondence might excite general curiosity, the subject matter of which that correspondence treats is of such important and momentous concern to the peace, welfare, and integrity of the British Empire, as to absent

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every

every less interesting consideration, and to require and justify a strict investigation of the proceedings which gave rise to those extraordinary epistles.

When, my Lord, an individual commits himself at the tribunal of the Public, he must be prepared to encounter such animadversions and remarks on his conduct and his writings, as the Public, without respecting titles or persons, is always disposed to bestow.

It was natural to expect, from the long and unreserved friendship which had subsisted between your Lordship and Earl FITZWILLIAM—that your Letter would prove a commentary on his—that it would further elucidate the mysterious business which occasioned it—and that, at least, it would zealously vindicate the conduct and character of the noble Earl from the obloquy and misrepresentation with which they had been unfairly and insidiously attacked. They, however, who expect to find any such satisfactory matters in your Lordship's "Reply," will, I believe, find themselves wholly disappointed.

I shall not hazard a conjecture—what could be your private motives for giving to the public thirteen pages of courtly verbiage, that scarcely skim over the subject; a subject too which your  
noble

noble correspondent pressed so earnestly on your attention ; but the tenor and meaning of your Answer are sufficiently obvious, and might be expressed in fourteen words, *viz.* that you disapproved of the noble Earl's conduct altogether, during his Viceroyship of Ireland.

The spirit and character of modern politics, and of modern parties, are indeed hostile to all the ties of amity, and to every endearing connection and relationship which binds man to man : for no sooner does this inimical spirit fully occupy the human heart, than it immediately extinguishes all its nobler sentiments, it alienates the mind from its former affections, converts the sweet emotions of friendship itself into feelings of irreconcilable enmity, and “ carries the poison of distrust and resentment into houses never before at variance.”

We may then cease to admire, that you, my Lord, acting as you do with the party that has treated Earl FITZWILLIAM with such flagrant injustice, should take a decided part against him, and censure his conduct in a stile and diction, varnished indeed with copious professions of friendship, but devoid of one satisfactory reason or convincing argument, to substantiate your allegations.

Your Lordship frequently alludes to a former Letter addressed to Earl FITZWILLIAM, which, we are led to suppose, provoked his answers; this first letter appears not to have been published, but you seem to have recapitulated its contents in the one now before the public.

Concerning Earl FITZWILLIAM's late administration, you mention, (as stated in your former Letter) "that a general belief prevailed, "that in the noble Earl's final arrangements, "and concluding conversation with his Majesty's "Ministers, at which others assisted, it was settled, that no material measure, either as to *persons* or *things*, was to be decided upon without "further communication and concurrence with "the Cabinet of England." Now, my Lord, it appears that it was wholly unnecessary for you to repeat this assertion, inasmuch as your noble correspondent had, in his two answers to your first unpublished letter, explained in the most explicit and decisive language—the terms on which alone he consented to accept of the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland.

And I pray you, my Lord, which is more deserving of credit, your statement, of the arrangements" founded on "a general belief," even although that statement might be countenanced by m—st—l evasion or negation; or the open  
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and candid avowal of a Nobleman eminently distinguished by the honour and probity of his character, when at the same time, he solemnly flakes that honour, and that character on the truth of his assertions?

LORD FITZWILLIAM states, in his first Letter,—“ That the Emancipation of the Roman Catholics of Ireland was a measure determined on in the British Cabinet, even before the Duke of P—and his friends participated in its councils,—that it was the boast of the W— administration to have begun the business, and that, on the day of the Duke of P——— kissing hands, it was determined to bring it forwards this Session.”—In his Lordship’s second Letter he observes, that—“ first, the Catholic question entered for nothing into the real cause of his recal; and secondly, that from the very beginning, as well as in the whole proceedings of that fatal business, for such he feared he must call it, *he acted in perfect conformity with the original outline settled between him and his M——’s M———, previous to his departure from London.*” His Lordship proceeds to state further, “ that, from the year 1793,—(when the Roman Catholics obtained the elective franchise) he was decidedly of opinion—that the work ought to be completed,

“ and



“ and the Catholics relieved from every remain-  
 “ ing disqualification. In this opinion the Duke  
 “ of P—— uniformly concurred with him; and,  
 “ when this question came under discussion pre-  
 “ vious to his departure for Ireland, he found  
 “ the Cabinet, with Mr. P—— at their head,  
 “ strongly impressed with the same conviction.”  
 “ *Had I found it otherwise, adds EARL FITZ-*  
 “ *WILLIAM, I never would have undertaken the*  
 “ *Government.*”

Such then, my Lord, is the real statement of the “previous Arrangement,” which contains such stubborn facts, and damning truths,—that, should it fail to attach at last a *Proteus* M——, he must be pronounced to be endued with political Infallibility.

It further appears—that the late Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in his official dispatches, regularly reported the progress that was making towards the total Emancipation of the Roman Catholics. Not, however, until the dismissal of the B——ds did he receive the slightest intimation of the impropriety or inexpediency of the measure.—

But, before we discuss that singular affair, it will be absolutely necessary, for its better and clearer comprehension, to take a short retrospective survey of the state of Ireland.

Your

Your Lordship seems to be satisfied, that from your own experience, when chief Governor of Ireland, you could assist your noble Friend with practical documents, which might be beneficially applied to his system of conduct in that important station.

My Lord, in this revolutionary age, it cannot be supposed that the routine of business in the management of the Irish Politics of your times, can apply to the present.

An abortive kind of revolution had taken place in that Kingdom; different Arrangements and other modes of conduct necessarily followed; a new Dynasty of Lord-Lieutenants commenced, and your Lordship will please to recollect—that you are chronicled among the last Viceroys of the old.

It must however be admitted,—that there is a resemblance in the measures and events that distinguished the latter part of your Lordship's administration in Ireland and the present times;—in the former period, we were involved in a ruinous and disastrous War; such exactly is our situation at present; Ireland was then, as now, in a state of alarming perturbation; and that nation, in your time, was struggling for its Rights and Liberties, against the over-ruling Power of an English P—— C——, as it is at present

present against its over-ruling Influence.—There is one other remarkable coincidence of circumstances,—your Lordship was also abruptly dismissed from your Government, and your successor (the Duke of Portland) nominated without the etiquette—*lamentabile dictu!*—without even the etiquette of a previous intimation. The causes of each event were however totally different. Your Lordship acting under a Cabinet of M——s, instituted, one would suppose, expressly for the punishment and ruin of a People, dealt out your pittances of freedom to the nation you governed, only as they were wrung by force from the iron gripe of Oppression, and you were recalled in consequence of a change of Ministry, and the establishment of a Whig administration, which, during its ephemeral existence, restored to Ireland its national independence, and snatched the whole Empire from imminent perdition.

The state of Parties in Ireland since the Revolution of 1688, has been inseparably connected with the three religious persuasions of its inhabitants, and the spirit of its Politics have arisen from the exertions of one of those Parties to maintain a domineering ascendancy over the rest.

The governing Party are exclusively of the established church; of which it is worthy of remark, that its followers are less numerous, contrary to what obtains in other countries, than either of the other Sects, but for this very reason they enjoy an ample dividend of the good things of the land: They form, as it were, a body corporate in the nation, that monopolizes all places of emolument, honour and patronage, in the revenue, the church, and the state. As masters of faith, they are great latitudinarians, lukewarm Christians, and very unworthy members indeed of the religion they profess. But if they are indifferent in spiritual, they make ample amends by an ardent pursuit of, and a zealous attachment to temporal concerns. An obsequiousness of demeanor, a supple pliability of principle that can, with the utmost facility, warp and twist and untwist itself conformably to the jarring and opposite measures of succeeding administrations, compose the chief political features of a Church-of-Ireland Man. God forbid! however, that this laxity of principle should attach itself to Protestantism in general. These errors are to be looked for in the political, not in the religious creed of its professors, among whom there are numbers distinguished by the most amiable philanthropy, and the most active bene-

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volence,

volence, virtues which peculiarly characterize the Protestant Christian. Nevertheless, these are the Gentry who in Ireland profess—that—“ they “ are totally at a loss to conceive what cause or “ pretext the people can find to be discontent- “ ed;” who continually expatiate on the en- v- able blessings of our glorious constitution, and who most eloquently declaim—over their claret —on the present happiness and rising prosperity of their country.

Wholly different from this last description of People, and rather more considerable as to number are the Dissenters: if we consider the qualities that distinguish them,—their industry, their love of order, their probity, their deco- rous manners, their amity—so truly christian— towards each other, their general information, their liberal regard for religious and political li- berty, their adherence to the genuine principles and spirit of the English Constitution, and, fi- nally, their generous and patriotic exertions to promote an union among Irishmen of every de- nomination,—if these be qualities that challenge the regard and esteem of good men,—then are the Irish sectaries, take them all in all, the most respectable class of people in Ireland, and un- doubtedly as respectable as any nation on th- face of the earth can boast of.

Your Lordship need not be informed—that the preceding divisions of the inhabitants of Ireland are properly colonial; they indeed owe their origin to English and Scotch colonists, although their present descendants have been considerably blended with the natives by intermarriages; until of late, however, they were regarded by them, with envy and implacable hatred, as aliens, usurpers and robbers.

The aboriginal Irish, at this day, form more than two thirds of the population of the country. These are they, who, for six centuries have been treated with all the rigour, cruelty, and injustice, that the most insolent conquerors could exercise over the most abject slaves. Driven from their antient possessions and patrimonial inheritances, ex-paled from any participation in the laws of their invaders, insulted, inflaved, and murdered with impunity; is it to be wondered at—that they should cherish an invincible dislike of their oppressors, aggravated and inflamed, as it was, by a continual repetition of their numerous wrongs, and by the additional stimulus of religious antipathy? Hence arose those ferocious hostilities and constant insurrections, marked by horrible and savage excesses, which blot and disfigure every page of Irish history, from its commencement even to the present times. Yet

these very natives, although misrepresented, and traduced as fierce and untameable barbarians, offer to the eye of Philosophy a most interesting picture. In them she recognizes a race indelibly stamped by the impressivè hand of Nature with congenial vigour of body and energy of mind. Amid the humble cottages of these poor people she contemplates, at the close of the 18th century, the manners and character of the primitive ages,—love of indolence and of social enjoyments,—unostentatious and genuine hospitality,—warm friendship,—quick resentment,—implacable revenge,—constitutional courage,—and invincible fortitude ; in fine, Philosophy will ascribe their virtues to the national character, but their vices to the errors of their government ; the defects of their civil polity, and the almost total privation of civil liberty. Of the Roman Catholic Gentlemen it may be observed that they in general, excel in personal and mental endowments, and by elegance of manners, and liberality of mind, very forcibly recommend the national virtues. Nor are the clergy of this persuasion less deserving of commendation ; unremittingly attentive to their religious duties, indefatigable in their pastoral attendance, and exemplary in their lives,—to them the country

mor

more indebted for the preservation of its internal peace, than to all the penal laws and military establishments that government could institute. The unshaken loyalty of this great body of People to the crown of England, and to his Majesty's person, has never been impeached. Their generous conduct and noble fidelity,—in abandoning their all—to follow the desperate fortunes of a fugitive Prince,—prove their unequivocal attachment to Monarchy, which, on the total failure of the house of STUART, they have transferred to the illustrious house of BRUNSWICK. Even in the present unpopular War, have they ever flinched from their duty? Have they ever betrayed symptoms of disaffection? Ireland has furnished for the war not less than 120 thousand men; men who have, at all times, born the brunt of the battle; of these—three-fourths at least were Roman Catholics. And what after all do they demand?—That, they should be bound by the same laws, enjoy the same rights, and be interested in the defence of the constitution equally with the rest of their countrymen. Against this just plea the Coronation-Oath,—“for lack of argument,” is set up; as if the established religion is to be supported only by the persecution of all others; yet, by matchless inconsistency,



inconsistency, the E——sh G——t upholds in his hierarchy his holiness the Pope, recognizes the Roman Catholic as the established Religion in Corsica, and authorizes the establishment of the same Religion in the Provinces of Canada, while, at the same time, it refuses to concede to the just claims of three millions of loyal and petitioning subjects; and for what reason? merely because they are Roman Catholics!

Such, my Lord, are the characters and conditions of the three descriptions of people that compose the Irish nation. These, since the Revolution of 1688, formed three distinct Parties, actuated by different motives and interests, and regarding each other with enmity and distrust. It was the cruel and illiberal policy of G——t to foment and encourage these party distinctions, and by loading the Roman Catholic with an intolerable weight of penal laws, and by fettering him with arbitrary disqualifications, it vainly presumed that it had stifled and extinguished the spirit of the party most formidable for its numbers, and had disheartened—or intimidated—or bought off the others.

Thus was Ireland subjugated by the domination of an English P—— C—— which put in requisition

quisition its revenues, and controlled at will—its parliament, and its laws.

Now and then, however, the nation discovered symptoms of political existence. The first dawn of Irish freedom may be discerned on passing the Octennial Bill in the year 1768. The Parliament of Ireland, antecedent to that period, was only determinable on the demise of the Crown, and consequently could be deemed, at best, but an aristocratical senate. In 1770 an effort was made to ascertain the independence of the Irish Parliament, by rejecting the money-bill, a bill always framed conformable to Poyning's law, in the English Cabinet. The then Viceroy—Lord TOWNSHEND, could not relish such democratic proceedings, and the bill was therefore stifled at its birth. The intentions of the British Government towards Ireland, were indeed sufficiently obvious—by its introducing, and causing to be passed—the perpetual Mutiny-Bill, —an Act, which puts the Nation, at any time, under martial law, and secures to England her supremacy by the logic of the Bayonet.

At length—the GREAT EVENT commenced, which forms the most distinguished æra in the chronicles of the human race, and Ireland has had the honour of taking the lead among the  
nations

nations of Europe—in receiving lessons of liberty and independence from America.

During the fateful American war, by the mismanagement and improvidence of its conductors, Ireland was drained of its military and left absolutely defenceless. Then it was that the Deliverers of their Country—the IRISH VOLUNTEERS arose. The annals of nations furnish no example of a military institution that comprehended so much virtue and patriotism, or that was attended with such beneficial consequences. This singular army of Citizens—EDMUND BURKE,—long before his political apostacy,—defines—“New in its kind, and adequate in its purposes. It effected its end “without its exertion, it was not under the “authority of the law most certainly; but it “derived from an authority still higher; and “as they say of Faith, it is not contrary to “reason but above it; so this army did not “so much contradict the spirit of the law as “superfede it.” Protecting the Country from a threatened invasion may be reckoned among the least important of its services. So effectually were interior peace and security preserved, that the Banditti which infested the kingdom were no more heard of, and the very names of White-Boys, and Right-Boys, and Steel-

Steel-Boys, and Defenders—ceased to be remembered. In fine, in this golden age of Ireland, the Jails were tenantless, and the Judges idle, the animosities of Party were extinguished, the rights of hospitality were liberally and universally exercised, without any discrimination of station or religion. Men, hitherto at variance—without knowing why, began to perceive that they were brethren and fellow citizens, whose rights and interests were nearly the same, and the Protestants became not less conscious than the Presbyterians and Roman Catholics—that they themselves were included in the subjection of their countrymen, and that they existed in a state of servile dependancy—at once the instruments and the slaves of foreign domination. Of this union of an armed nation—the partial but important revolution of 1782 was the natural consequence; and fear, together with the concurrence of a short-lived patriotic administration, obtained at length those just rights which national prejudice and illiberality never would have voluntarily conceded.

Irish independence was, however, virtually but nominal, forasmuch as British Supremacy gained by Influence what it lost in Power, and corruption was established into a system. “In *this country*,” LóRD MOIRA emphatically  
D observed,

observed, "Corruption was supposed to exist; but here it had the decency to veil itself; in Ireland, however, Corruption stalked abroad unveiled, and with the pravity of a prostitute."

This mode of proceeding, applying directly to the passions and weaknesses of men, has been but too successful; but to make it yet surer, British Influence conjured up a state chimera, which has been termed "Protestant Ascendancy"—that served for a stalking-horse to entrap that honesty which it was unable to corrupt.

Such, my Lord, are the causes which may assist to develop the extraordinary conduct of the M—— in sacrificing a Nobleman no less eminent for his Abilities than his Virtues, together with the welfare of so considerable a part of the British Empire, and the consequent safety of the whole, to the patronage and support of a Junto, without whose assistance it would be impossible for him to preserve his dominancy over Ireland.

Of the removal of certain persons from official situations—Earl FITZWILLIAM has narrated the whole proceedings so circumstantially, and so perspicuously, that whoever is capable of feeling a generous or virtuous emotion, must, on the perusal of his letters, sincerely sympathize with

with him, and be fully convinced that “he had been compelled, by incessant sollicitations and the most urgent importunities, to undertake the arduous task for which he relinquished all his comforts ;—that the Catholic question entered not in the smallest degree into the cause of his recall ;—that the terrifying enumerations of evils and miseries to result to the empire from a measure which his enemies affect to consider as having either originated exclusively with himself or been hurried on by him rashly, precipitately, or without consent or consultation *ought not to be regarded* ;—for, had Mr. BERESFORD never been dismissed, these miseries would never have been heard of, and his Lordship would have remained ;” —“ but, so remaining,” says his Lordship, “ I should have been disgraced indeed ; disgraced by the failure of all the measures which I had planned for the public welfare, and loaded with all the odium which *that man* and his connections have entailed upon that government which I was sent to displace.

You, my Lord, “pretend not to form a comprehension of the alarming Power to Government of the BERESFORD Family or Followers.” In the foregoing pages I have endeavoured to trace the cause as well as to account for the

“Metamorphosis” from the “Clerks which you  
 “left them, to the Ministers which Lord FITZ-  
 “WILLIAM found them.”

That Nobleman was indeed most unfit for a  
 Lord Lieutenant of the old stamp; “his cha-  
 “racter was not made to be vile and subservi-  
 “ent.” He was rather too delicate to tread in  
 the dirty foot-prints of his predecessors, and too  
 proud to be checked with a hook in his nose,  
 by a M—— on this side of the water, and a  
 Lord C—— on the other. He was besides  
 too generous and too wise to barter his fame,  
 his honesty, and his nobility for the emoluments  
 of office.

Strange! that there are men, who, blinded  
 by vanity, avarice, or love of power, might  
 move in their proper sphere with credit to them-  
 selves and advantage to their neighbours, but  
 who wilfully forsake the obvious walk that na-  
 ture marked out for them, and impotently and  
 awkwardly essay to mount the ladder of ambi-  
 tion only for

The hand of Scorn  
 To point his slow and moving Finger at.

My Lord, it was impossible that the late Vice-  
 roy could fulfil the grand object of his mission,  
 without

without a total change of men and measures; but supposing the measures were not to be pursued, he was nevertheless justifiable in removing the men.

It is ever baleful to the welfare and happiness of the community, when a numerous party, cohering together by the cement of consanguinity and of interest, forms as it were, in the midst of a state, a center of attraction,—a nucleus of privileges, power and influence, whose vortex, pervading the utmost limits of the political system, whirls into its sphere of action every movement of the existing government, and involves in its own particular circumvolutions the general interests of the nation.

That the Irish first C—— of the R—— has been a faithful servant of the Crown is, I believe, unquestionable; but does it never happen—that a zealous supporter of its Prerogatives, proves himself, in the exercise of his office, an enemy to the general and local interests of the people?—Certain it is, that Mr. B—— is a most unpopular character in Ireland, and if the charges alledged against him be true, he justly earns his unpopularity.—He is accused of having encumbered the R—— by unnecessary vexations and perplexing exactions, which, while they embarrass the fair trader, contribute  
nothing



nothing to its increase. His support of the Distilleries and dereliction of the Breweries, is as notorious as it is flagitious; but by this, G—— obtains too important purposes,—an increase of Revenue, and a means of controlling the populace,—by rendering that infernal poison, Ardent Spirits, accessible to them, and thus keeping them in a state of depravity, ignorance, servility and wretchedness. The expenditure on the new Custom House and its appendages, with its indefinable train of peculating jobs, is another subject of public disgust and indignation. This stupendous and magnificent fabric, which is a monumental satire on the scanty trade of the Irish metropolis, is supposed to have cost the nation a million of money. A great part of it is appropriated for dwellings—or rather palaces—for the C——s. Mr. B—— has secured for himself the left Wing, which is fitted up in a stile of royal magnificence.

But, my Lord, suppose the *Family* and Followers had *not* engrossed all the lucrative posts and employments, together with all the power, patronage, and influence in every department of the state;—admitting that they are *not* proud, venal, rapacious, and despotic;—yet, forasmuch as they have incurred public odium, as they have become obnoxious to the people,  
and

and as their supremacy is universally reprobated and detested, it would surely have been wise in his M——'s M—— at this critical period, to have consented to the removal of such men from official and ostensible situations.

After all, the dismissal of the B—— was perhaps but a secondary consideration with Mr. P——: for are there any supposable amities or connections that a minister would not sacrifice to his views and interests? The truth is, the men with whom Earl FITZWILLIAM associated in his councils, possessing the entire confidence of the people, and resolving to pursue patriotic and popular measures, were *therefore* peculiarly obnoxious to the M——; for could he consistently countenance such measures in Ireland, while he himself pursued diametrically opposite ones here?

My Lord! In times like the present, this public struggle for patronage is unseasonable and unseemly. To squabble about the plunder of a ship just on the point of foundering in a storm, has always been considered as the height of madness, and the last efforts of despair.

The advocates for the M——, in this unprecedented case, ground all their arguments on two points—that it is the King's undoubted prerogative to dismiss his servants from official situations

tuations whenever he pleases; and, that the recal of Earl FITZWILLIAM conveyed, either directly or by implication, no degree of blame on him, or on those who advised his Majesty to the measure. Now, although the prerogatives of the Crown are admitted to be irrefragible, yet, as his Majesty, whenever he exercises any act of his prerogative, always consults his confidential servants, it is also the undoubted privilege of Parliament to investigate the cause and motive which induced those servants to advise such an act.

Is it not therefore clearly evident, that as his M———'s M———, in the present instance, repelled an investigation, and refused to explain their motives for advising his Majesty to recal the Chief Governor of Ireland, in the middle of a session the most critical in point of the situation of the two kingdoms that was ever known, and at a time when it was peculiarly necessary that the people of both should be as unanimous as possible, that an high degree of blame, or even criminality, attaches, either to the person so, on a sudden, recalled, without any reason assigned, or to those who advised his recal? Indeed, my Lord, this shameless proceeding is an insult to the common sense of mankind; for however the M——— may affect, in the face of  
the

the world, to exculpate the noble Earl, he most evidently encourages serious charges against him, of precipitant conduct in the measures of his administration. And in this point you, my Lord, seem to coincide with the M——; nay, you feel “a strong shock of alarm” at the promptitude with which the late Chief Governor of Ireland entered upon the Catholic business. Yet, methinks your Lordship, of all men, ought to be fully impressed with the folly and danger of procrastination; as it was that fatal cause which rendered the brilliant display of your—dress and address, and courtly qualifications, before a surly and unpolished Republican Congress, null and ineffectual. Had the Commission in which you presided been well timed, there is no question but your—red-heels—chapeau-bras—and—the “*chiffelled blushes*” of your bust—would have been irresistible, and the United States at this day might have formed a part of the British Empire.

What applied then to America will now apply to Ireland; if concessions are to be granted, no time should be lost in granting them. How was the public mind affected when Lord FITZWILLIAM assumed the government of that kingdom? All descriptions of people looked up to him as the angel of their deliverance, and the

guardian genius of their rights. An universal shout of acclamation burst from every part of the kingdom at once, and congratulatory addresses poured in from all quarters, all expressing as if by one voice, that Earl FITZWILLIAM, by the public measures proposed to be adopted by him, and by associating in his councils men of virtue and talents, had proved himself the true friend of Ireland, and he therefore justly merits the entire confidence of the nation. On the rumour of his recal, the addresses of condolence were, if possible, more numerous and expressive. "They lamented that they were about to be deprived of a Chief Governor who had endeared himself to the country by repressing prodigality, corruption, and venality, and by his endeavors to unite a whole nation in one common band of brotherly affection. His departure," they added, "would leave them hopeless, inasmuch as they dreaded, that the same men who had lately exercised the government, would resume their power and their places, and consequently, that the venal, profuse, and tyrannical measures of the former A—— ——— would be systematically persevered in."

There is one passage in Lord FITZWILLIAM'S Letters, from which I cannot avoid dissenting. He observes, that to his measures Mr. P——

has

has no objection; and he predicts that he will adopt them by the medium of his successor. But, hitherto the course of events has not verified this prediction. Its accomplishment, notwithstanding, may be intended by the M—— at a future and more convenient period; at a period when an UNION of the two kingdoms seems ambiguously alluded to, as the stipulated price of further concessions. To effect an UNION, in the present temper of the times, would indeed be an Herculean achievement, almost as arduous as to join the two countries by a bridge or a causeway. At the same time, it must be confessed, that no attempt appears too arduous for a M——, endued with colossal power to undertake, except—relinquishing that power. The world, however, has only to judge of future designs by existing measures, and those do not warrant any such conjecture; on the contrary, the Catholic Emancipation Bill has been since thrown out in the Irish House of Commons by a great majority; by a majority which a month before was prepared most obsequiously to support the measure.

My Lord, such unblushing venality, such public turpitude, and such political prostitution, speak more emphatically for the necessity of a Parliamentary Reform in Ireland, than volumes

of the most convincing and most eloquent declamation.

These are the methods, these are the arts, the M—— employs to effectuate his purposes, and to preserve his dominancy. By such manœuvring he has ruled for twelve years a cringing and cowering nation, with the iron sceptre of a Despot.

But lest, through the rising indignation of the people, this system, in Ireland, should fail, he seems determined, “with a mighty hand and an “out-stretched arm,” to support it. Why else are the just demands of the Roman Catholics refused, after hope and expectancy had been so long held out to them? Why else, at this awful crisis, are troops transporting to Ireland?—What! Is it by the blood-stained arms of a shattered and discomfited army the M—— proposes to conciliate the affections of a nation? Is it by transferring the seat of war from the fateful banks of the Sambre and the Scheldt to the Shannon and the Boyne, he would settle its disputes and reconcile its differences? This might do, perhaps, to suppress the irregular sallies of illegal insurrection; but it is quite another affair, when a people, united and unanimous—when FOUR MILLIONS of voices demand, in a constitutional but determined tone, a redress  
of

of grievances. Is it—that the Empire is still too unwieldy after the loss of America,—that he wishes to disincumber it of Ireland also?—Or, has there not been blood enough spilled,—or, are not the people sufficiently taxed,—that measures harsh, and coercive, and unprecedented in the history of the English Constitution are to be persisted in?

To be able to effect such things, is doubtless a proof of uncommon ability in the M——, or of uncommon stupidity in the people. Yet, if we seek for other great talents in Mr. P——, than those requisite for corrupting and securing parliamentary majorities, we shall seek in vain. His inflated Projects, that promised such prodigious things, have produced only abortions. His schemes and his expedients,—begun in fire and flame,—have uniformly ended in fume and vapour. Yet unadmonished and undismayed by a series of dreadful disasters, defeated in all his plans, and duped by all his allies, he still perseveres with unaccountable infatuation to carry on a ruinous war, and to drive,—by measures as irritating as unjust, a greatly injured people to rebellion and despair. But the M—— is alarmed!—"Will that M——" observes Mr. GRATTAN, "who has lost Flanders—who has lost Holland—who has lost part of Germany  
" — who



“ —who has subsidized Catholics—who has  
 “ gone to German Catholics for every penny-  
 “ worth of blood and pound of flesh he has sacri-  
 “ ficed, will *he* rather continue to lose the empire  
 “ by subsidizing Catholics, than preserve the  
 “ Constitution and the empire by Catholic  
 “ Irish? The M—— is alarmed! was he  
 “ alarmed at the loss of the West Indies—was  
 “ he alarmed at the loss of Holland—was he  
 “ alarmed at the successive defeats of our armies?  
 “ No; this he bore with fortitude; but when the  
 “ people of Ireland are brought within the consti-  
 “ tution, then tears! tears such as ministers should  
 “ shed over falling empires; tears such as the se-  
 “ nate, of Carthage shed, when, unmoved at the  
 “ defeat of their HANNIBAL, they wept at the  
 “ miscarriage of a petty cabal!” However, the  
 time may, possibly, not be very remote, when  
 this alarming M——, this *shepherd's boy*, shall  
 call for help, but call in vain—when the wolf is  
*really* approaching.

. My Lord, it is a circumstance of true glory  
 to be objectionable to Mr. P——, because ta-  
 lents, virtue and public spirit are incompatible  
 with the servile subserviency that he requires.  
 By recalling Earl FITZWILLIAM from a go-  
 vernment, by him so auspiciously commenced,  
 “ he has,” indeed, “ deposed a faithful servant

“ of

“ of the Crown, and a beneficial Governor  
 “ for the people of Ireland;” and, let me add,  
 a Governor better qualified than any other man  
 in his Majesty’s dominions to represent his Ma-  
 jesty in that kingdom, and to conciliate the af-  
 fections of every description of its inhabitants.  
 —The W—— A—— has been bruted by  
 the m——l Trumpeters, as a model of Vicere-  
 gal wisdom and conduct, and invidiously oppo-  
 sed to the Government of Earl FITZWILLIAM;  
 it will be seen by the contrast, what qualities  
 are necessary in a M——’s estimation to con-  
 stitute the wisdom of an Irish Viceroy.

The political crimes and turpitude, which  
 for ages harrassed and oppressed the devoted  
 Kingdom of Ireland, were, during Lord W——’s  
 Viceroyship matured and perfected. The most  
 scandalous venality was, with brazen effrontery,  
 openly practised. The Peerage was publicly  
 sold for money, to any one rich or shameless  
 enough to become a purchaser.—Such a Traf-  
 fic, my Lord, so infamous and impudent, is a  
 pointed satire on the very nature and essence of  
 titled honours, and most degrading to the dig-  
 nity of the House of Lords. The Forces which  
 were to remain in Ireland for its defence were  
 sent to be butchered on the Continent, express-  
 ly

ly contrary to law, and at the imminent risque of losing the country. Immense sums of the public money were lavished on the unqualified traffic of human flesh, without legal sanction, account or security. In fine, almost all the places and offices of profit and trust were, on the eve of the said Chief G————r's departure, distributed among his creatures and adherents, and their very reversions so bestowed as to put them out of the power of the Crown for years to come.

To overthrow this shameless System, and to substitute in its place—wise, just, and patriotic measures—form the grand features of Earl FITZWILLIAM's administration. In effecting this, he displayed extraordinary Talents and Integrity;—he associated in his councils, men of the first-rate abilities, and of the most unblemished reputation, men who had justly acquired the unbounded confidence of the People, and who served their country without place or pension;—he united all Parties in the support of a hateful and ruinous war,—not that the nation approved of either its principles or continuance, but from the generous resolution,—even while inevitable destruction seemed impending,—“that  
 “ Ireland would share the fate of, and stand  
 “ or

“ or fall with Great Britain;”—he obtained, in consequence, unprecedented supplies of men and money towards the defence of the empire;—he overthrew the hydra of corruption, and had he remained, would effectually have destroyed it;—lastly, the grand object of his benevolent policy extended even to the cottages of the poor, who were at length, after long complaining, relieved from the distressing **Hearth Tax**. He encouraged the breweries, and restrained the immoderate consumption of spirituous liquors, which had so dreadfully affected the health, morals, and industry, of the lower orders. He abolished the odious and detested Police; an institution that answered no other purpose than—to increase patronage, to tax and oppress the country, and to disgrace and corrupt the magistracy. He regulated the Treasury Board, which before was managed with scandalous and lavish profusion. He preferred a character—pre-eminent in learning and virtue—to the Primacy, and, contrary to precedent, but conformable to justice, he appointed from out of the University the person best qualified to govern it. Lastly, the grand object of his administration was the total emancipation of the Roman Catholics, a subject which has been already fully treated of.

By having performed so much in so short a time, we may form an idea,—what immense advantages would have accrued to Ireland, had

Earl FITZWILLIAM remained the accustomed term of three years in the Government : his own estate in that country is an epitome of what the whole island would probably have been,—a terrestrial Paradise—where all is smiling, prosperous and happy, where the peasants are substantial farmers, and the farmers—gentlemen. But alas! in the midst of this golden dream, while the Viceroy was assiduously employed in correcting abuses and redressing grievances,—while he was meditating on plans for future improvements, he was suddenly recalled.

The ignominy and treachery of this precipitate measure rests entirely on those, who, with more than Prussian perfidy, first cajoled the nation of their resources, and afterwards refused to redress those grievances which they had previously stipulated, should be the reward of its generous and unexampled contributions.

My Lord!—I know not which more excites my indignant astonishment,—the desperate temerity of the m——, or—the slavish versatility of the majority of the I—— P——; the first,—in urging, at such a critical and unseasonable time—his dictatorial measures, and trampling—with haughty arrogance, the laws of honour and justice under his feet; and the other,—in veering about,—a true political weather-cock,—to his every breath, equally complying whether that breath is to move it a point, or whirl it round  
the

the whole compass of corruption. In vain do reason, justice, honour, danger, and necessity plead;—there sit the hirelings of venality, collected from brothels, taverns, and gaming tables, vociferating for the question, while the most convincing logic is scoffed at, and the most brilliant eloquence unheeded. These deaf adders, prone and creeping in all the mire and filth of political prostitution, “shut their ears to the voice of the “charmer—charm he ever so wisely,” and decide on every salutary and patriotic motion, by a previous question, or a vote of adjournment.

What can be expected from persisting in such a scheme of government?—what but general indignation, irretrievable confusion, and ultimate ruin to the empire.

At this awfully eventful period, when every new day teems with some dreadful and unlooked-for vicissitude—when the old frame of civil institutes is unhinged and disjointed, and the Thrones of the earth are shaken to their foundations—when the dangerous Secret has gone forth, never—never to be recalled, THAT THE PEOPLE, ACTING IN CONCERT, AND CONSCIOUS OF THEIR POWER, ARE IRRESISTIBLE, there are but two possible expedients that G—— can make use of, to allay the rising ferment of discontent and disaffection—COERCION and REDRESS. The first cannot produce permanent effects, while its immediate operation  
must

must be terrible ; but the other, as it is founded on the immutable laws of justice and humanity, must be the safest, easiest, and most durable, because it secures obedience to the laws, and loyalty to the throne, on the surest of all tenures  
---THE LOVE OF THE PEOPLE.

I look therefore to the speedy and total emancipation of the Irish Roman Catholics as an event of certitude ; for it is not to be imagined, that the M——— can be so frantic as to light up the torch of civil war to prevent it. He will at last yield to that dernier subterfuge, which his arrogance and incapacity have so often compelled him to submit to——“ Existing circumstances.”

From this great measure, whenever it takes place, I augur the happiest consequences. It must eventually induce a Reform in the Constitution, as indeed it will be in itself a reform of infinite importance. Under this impression, my Lord, I indulge a rational hope, that the British Constitution, without convulsion or confusion, will gradually re-assume its pristine spirit and purity, and that the British Empire will once more flourish, the envy and admiration of all nations.

O' CONNOR.

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If in abhorrence of foul slander's vice,  
My muse puts on indignant satire's frown,  
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THE PRESENT WAR.  
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SCARCITY OF SPECIE.

*Nec ego pacem nolo: Sed pacis nomine bellum involutum reformido.  
Quare si pace frui volumus, bellum gerendum est. Si bellum omittimus,  
pace nunquam fruemur.*

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1797.



# REFUTATION,

Æc. Æc.

THE appearance of a book written by Mr. Erskine, has naturally excited the public attention. The subject which it embraces is most important, and the crisis at which it appears is momentous.

The ingenuity of the Author, and the influence of his name, will have considerable effect upon the public mind: but the general attraction of his topics, during a period of despondency, will have infinitely more. Engines like these, which are so powerful to move the general opinion, are at all times to be watched with anxiety. They constitute a force, the effect of which may be dangerous, even when the object of the writer is salutary. But,

in the present period, we ought to place a double guard upon all undue means by which the national opinion may be influenced.

It is the most awful moment which this country has ever experienced. The threatened invasion, and the temporary embarrassment in her medium of circulation, are the least formidable of those dangers which menace her prosperity. But whatever these dangers may be, (and these I shall hereafter point out,) I trust that Great Britain will not be afraid to face them as she ought. She will reflect, that it is upon her firm and steady conduct at this period, that her honour and happiness, as a great people, must depend.

Thinking, as I do from my soul, that Mr. Erskine's View of the Causes and Consequences of the present War with France, is not calculated to inspire this country with such sentiments as accord with her present situation—that it tends to advise measures derogatory to her pristine glory, unworthy of her present power, and inconsistent with her future safety; I do not need an apology for the attempt to refute his opinions.

But while I endeavour to shew that the work is fallacious in its statements, erroneous in its reasoning, and noxious to the interests of the country in its object; I trust that I shall not be found to transgress

that decorum which is due to myself, Mr. Erskine, and the Public.

For the Author I entertain the highest personal respect. I admire his talents as an advocate; I acknowledge his sincerity as a statesman: but I question the soundness of his political opinions. I am not instigated to the exercise of this undoubted right by any personal motive which can carry me beyond the bounds of fair discussion; I am not connected with any party which might influence my judgment; I shall reap neither honour nor emolument from a continuance or a change in the Ministry: I neither have, nor can have, any interest distinct from that of the community at large; and I am warmed by no other zeal, but an ardent wish that the country may act in a manner becoming its ancient character and its genuine interest.

I trust therefore, that I shall not misconceive Mr. Erskine's reasoning: I certainly shall not misrepresent it by design. It is with the main body of his argument that I intend to cope, without the use of sophistry or sarcasm. I will not advert to his imperfections as a writer, his inaccuracies and redundancies, or trivial contradictions; neither will I urge a single remark with the view of fastening a sting upon his private feelings. Still, however, this is not a season in which necessary truths should be tempered and softened down by compliment. I

shall therefore speak of men and measures with decency, but with firmness, and without reserve.

The outline of Mr. Erskine's Pamphlet is briefly as follows :

“ Mr. Pitt, convinced of the necessity of a Parliamentary Reform, but aware that it could not be carried into effect without a temporary sacrifice of his situation as Minister, preferred the possession of his place to the interest of the Nation. Influenced by this selfish view, he resolved upon a war with France, (at that time in a state of revolution,) as the only means to frustrate the measure. To render his expedient popular in the country, he used undue means to alarm the nation with fancied terrors for the safety of the constitution. He took advantage of the unguarded zeal of particular Societies for a Parliamentary Reform, and falsely charged them with a design to establish a republican form of government in the empire, and with the attempt to introduce a revolution, similar in all its consequences to that which had taken place in France. The Royal Proclamation, 21st May 1792, was issued from these motives ; and its immediate object was to counteract the efforts of the Society called the Friends of the People, to obtain a Parliamentary Reform. If supported by the friends of Ministry alone, it must have proved ineffectual.

“ tual. But, to give it force, the disunion of the  
 “ Whig Party was necessary, and this had been,  
 “ treacherously secured. Keeping a war with  
 “ France in view, the Minister filled the national  
 “ mind with a false suggestion, that a correspond-  
 “ ence had taken place between the disaffected at  
 “ home and the Rulers of that country ; and he in-  
 “ juriously charged France with a design, which she  
 “ never entertained, of overturning our monarchi-  
 “ cal establishment. Mr. Pitt’s hostility to the  
 “ French revolution, is considered by Mr. Erskine  
 “ as being decided and invariable from its com-  
 “ mencement. This is assigned as the true cause  
 “ why our Ministry refused to mediate between  
 “ France and the Combined Powers, at the request  
 “ of the unfortunate Louis. But the imprisonment  
 “ of that unhappy Monarch is represented as fur-  
 “ nishing the British Cabinet with a pretext for  
 “ measures which led more speedily and decidedly  
 “ to a rupture. They recalled our Ambassador  
 “ from Paris, and commenced a correspondence,  
 “ on our part haughty, unjust, and insulting, with  
 “ Monsieur Chauvelin. Deaf to the humble re-  
 “ monstrances of France, and regardless of her  
 “ pacific disposition, they refused to accept her ex-  
 “ planation, or even to negotiate for the demands  
 “ which they had made. Stimulated by this prin-  
 “ ciple, they denied to acknowledge her govern-  
 “ ment, and dismissed her ambassador with dis-  
 “ grace. To such conduct the commencement of



“ the war is attributed ; a war which, it is said, was  
 “ entered into by France with unwillingness, and  
 “ which our Ministry provoked, when we might  
 “ have compromised our differences by the means  
 “ of negotiation.”

Such is Mr. Erskine's account of the causes which gave rise to the present War. He states its object to be decidedly the same as that which is attributed to the other Combined Powers ; the dismemberment of France, and the restitution of her ancient despotic government : And this object of War Mr. Erskine alleges to be unjust, impolitic, impracticable, and chimerical.

The Author's view of the consequences of the War must necessarily have a strong connexion with the cause which he assigns for its commencement.  
 “ The British Cabinet prosecuted the contest for a  
 “ considerable period, with a view to effect the  
 “ wished-for alteration in the French government.  
 “ With this view, it unjustifiably encouraged and  
 “ fomented insurrections in France, and it neglect-  
 “ ed to proffer peace when our success had insured  
 “ its attainment.

“ Frustrated, at length, in these designs by the  
 “ glorious victories of France, and apprehensive  
 “ of a change in the popular opinion at home, it is  
 “ said that the Cabinet has abandoned the principle  
 “ upon

“ upon which it commenced hostilities ; yet that,  
 “ being still faithful to misconduct, it has adopted  
 “ one equally improper and unjust,—the cession  
 “ of territories which we have no right to demand,  
 “ and to obtain which it would be impolitic to  
 “ protract peace, even if we had the right. It is  
 “ farther contended, that the British Cabinet was  
 “ not sincere in their wishes for peace, upon the  
 “ very terms which they proposed : and this is ar-  
 “ gued from the facts which have transpired re-  
 “ specting the negotiations themselves. From  
 “ these data the French are justified in their treat-  
 “ ment of Mr. Wickham’s proposal, and are de-  
 “ clared inculpable for the dismissal of Lord  
 “ Malmesbury.”

The conclusions which are drawn from these  
 positions, and which Mr. Erskine labours to inculcate  
 upon the people of this empire, are,—“ That  
 “ peace is to be made at any rate, as necessary to  
 “ the prosperity and absolute salvation of the coun-  
 “ try : That the annexation of Belgium to France  
 “ should not be an insurmountable bar to its con-  
 “ clusion : That to carry this measure into effect  
 “ without national degradation, to recall prosperity  
 “ and freedom to Great Britain, the present Mi-  
 “ nistry must be displaced ; and Mr. Fox, Mr.  
 “ Sheridan, and Mr. Erskine, and their friends,  
 “ should constitute the Cabinet of a new Admi-  
 “ nistration.”

Such is the sum and substance of the book which I purpose to examine. I have stated it as plainly and as fairly as I am able : I trust that I shall discuss it in the same spirit. I do not wish to justify the conduct of Ministry farther than their measures warrant, and the interests of the country require : I shall not arraign that of Opposition except on a similar principle.

With Mr. Pitt's conduct respecting a Parliamentary Reform, I have no concern, except so far as Mr. Erskine pronounces it to be the source of the present War. It is beyond the limit of my present design to agitate the propriety of the measure itself; but be it ever so necessary, I am sure that all attempts to compass it by means of popular associations ought to be condemned, inasmuch as they are inadequate to obtain their object, and are highly dangerous to our national tranquillity.

It is the observation of Montesquieu, whose exalted genius and extensive knowledge qualified him to become a reformer; " that to propose alterations belongs only to those who are so happy as to be born with a genius capable of penetrating into the entire constitution of a State." The ablest men will see the greatest difficulties. " They perceive the ancient abuses; they see how they must be reformed, but they are sensible also of the abuses of the reformation. They let the  
" evil

“ evil continue, if they fear a worse ; they are content with a lesser good, if they doubt of a greater ; they examine into the parts, to judge of them in connexion ; and they examine all their causes, to discover their different effects.”

Can an indiscriminate assemblage of the people lay claim to these qualifications, so essential to the task they would undertake ? Were such stupendous talents to be found in the meeting at Chalk Farm, or even in a majority of the Friends of the People ? But though the people are incapable of comprehending those measures which they are supposed to originate, it is easy to delude them into a notion that they do. An ambitious man will mislead our passions and our virtues, that he may promote his private views. Discontent and dissatisfaction are easily excited under the specious pretext of Reform, but with the real view of supplanting a Minister. He who rises into office by such artificial popularity, despises the very means which he has used to acquire it. The measure has then served its purpose, and is of course neglected. But other patrons are still found, who will urge it with similar hopes, and the people are doomed again to confide, and to be again disappointed. Happy is it for the nation, if the only consequence of these appeals to the vulgar judgment, is a change of Ministry. The great danger that is to be dreaded, is an intemperate change of the Constitution itself: that the people, maddened by

by disappointment, should listen to the factious and precipitate counsels of desperate men : that, like Sampson in his bonds, blind but omnipotent, they should pull down ruin on themselves, to be avenged of their deceivers.

The principle upon which this opinion is built, is not peculiar to any country or climate ; it is the universal eternal law of man, ascertained by universal experience. From the earliest revolutions noticed in history, down to the present period, from the days of Pisistratus to those of Robespierre, it will be found, that wherever the body of the people have interfered with theoretical plans of government, they have been deceived, disappointed, and generally enslaved \*.

If

\* A recent instance may teach us to appreciate the difference in value between the attempts at Reform, by means of an Association, and the efforts of an enlightened individual.

Disgusted at the disgraces of the American war, and alarmed at the increase of the national burdens, several counties, in 1779, petitioned the House of Commons for retrenchment and reform in the general expenditure. The subscribers of these petitions appointed committees to watch their progress in the House, and to promote their success. But these committees soon neglected the very object they were created to support. They substituted the design to re-organize the lower House of Parliament, although not one of the petitions, excepting that from Nottingham, complained of the state of our representation, or hinted at the necessity of a Parliamentary Reform. Led away by this scheme, they assembled, they addressed the people, obtained petitions from them, excited curiosity, and effect-

ed

If the measure be thus fundamentally dangerous, it is to be condemned and rejected, whether it comes from the Minister in place, or from the Patriot

ed nothing. But while these gentlemen neglected the original instructions of their constituents, the task of fulfilling them had fallen into abler hands. The Reform pointed out by the Nation was undertaken by Mr. Burke. He introduced his Bills for the better securing the Independence of Parliament. They were prefaced by a speech which can never be excelled. It is not the fertility of his fancy, the beauty of his language, the force of his illustrations, which excite our wonder; these are the common attributes of uncommon genius. It is his indefatigable research, his laborious attention, his minute examination, his comprehensive views, his cautious progress, that command our astonishment. Mild, gradual but decided in his plan, he reconciles the rights of individuals with the public welfare. He examines the diseases of the constitution with the skill of a statesman, but with the feelings of a father. His system is to watch and follow Nature, not to force her. He probes the wound with gentleness and with caution, but with a fixed eye and firm hand, and does not venture to use the knife until he is assured that the part is radically unsound. By perseverance, Mr. Burke effected a great deal of what he proposed: but he might have done more, if the committees had co-operated with his industry and his zeal. He has left an eternal monument behind him. But what was done by them? They were soon divided and dispersed; they performed nothing, and were speedily forgotten.

Mr. Burke's plan was certainly of great extent; but its magnitude dwindles to insignificance, when compared with the compass of that Reform which the Associators have laboured to introduce. Yet what man who can estimate himself will attempt more than Mr. Burke could venture to undertake? This lesson should be a strong one to all Reformers; but it should be infinitely more strong to the People. It will shew that Associators are

useless

triot who struggles to succeed him. I do not mean to impute improper motives either to the Duke of Richmond, Mr. Pitt, or Mr. Erskine, who have adopted this system in their turn. I will not speculate on the motives of any man. The same measure may undoubtedly be salutary at one season, and pernicious at another; and it may, of consequence, be opposed and supported at different times by the very same men, without any just imputation on their consistency. The situation of the public mind, and the peculiar current of existing events, must undoubtedly influence a real statesman to reject or press forward a particular measure. We may therefore estimate his talents for his situation, by the justness of his foresight, and the effects of his counsels. But, looking at our own hearts, we ought to consider the fallibility, and, I trust, the general integrity of mankind; and we should not rashly conclude, that the motive must be necessarily dishonest, because the measure is unwise.

The objection therefore points at these schemes, by whomsoever they are proposed. It is, that all plans which endeavour to enforce a Parliamentary

useless and inefficient, even when their designs are honest. There is but one alternative. They must either control the Government, or soon sink into insignificance. This last was the fortunate fate of these Associators, and of the Friends of the People. Should their power prove paramount to that of the Legislature, they will overthrow it. It was thus that the Jacobin Club annihilated at pleasure every government which rose up in France with mushroom expedition.

Reform

Reform by means of popular Affociations are either mischievous or idle ; mere spouting clubs, or paramount and domineering legislatures.

I do not urge this with a view either to impute blame to Mr. Erskine, or to rescue Mr. Pitt from the charge of inconsistency. But I urge it to prove, that the effort of the Friends of the People to procure a Parliamentary Reform in 1792, by means of their Association, was at least imprudent. That being so, it might have been frustrated by measures less dangerous but more effectual, than that of a war with France. If a Parliamentary Reform was to be promoted by such peaceable means as the constitution allows, what danger could ensue to the Minister from opposing it? It was not a greater favourite with the Nation in 1792, when introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Grey, than in 1782, or in 1783, or in 1785, when introduced by Mr. Pitt. In 1782, the Nation was discontented with Parliament, as the instrument which had continued our calamitous contest with America. In 1783, the country was even more inflamed against their representatives, from the recent coalition between Mr. Fox and Lord North. In 1785, the motion was brought forward by Mr. Pitt, who was then in office. If suspicions of insincerity could attach upon his conduct, it would have done so at that time, when it might have been supposed that his influence as Minister could have carried what he had in vain attempted



attempted under the Rockingham administration, and under that of Mr. Fox. Even in these critical times the measure was defeated, without a murmur from the people; and the Minister remained in office, with the confidence of the country. In 1792, when Mr. Grey made his motion, those who opposed it derived new strength from an argument which was unanswerable. The season was peculiarly unfitted to such an attempt. France was in a state of revolution. In Great Britain the public mind was influenced and agitated by the example\*. Ambitious and dangerous men had laboured to impress opinions not only hostile to the corruptions, but to the very being of the constitution. All Europe was preparing for war. Surely this was no time to make a hazardous experiment upon the forms of our government. To have agreed to the motion, would have been to condemn the existing Legislature as unserviceable and rotten; to encourage discontent among the people, without pointing out any effectual means of redress. Nothing was prepared to substitute in the place of the constitution which was thus to be reprobated. This ancient and superb edifice, the pride of our ancestors, the envy of Europe, the solid monument of our national virtue and national wisdom, was to be despoiled of its hereditary honours. This sure fastness against oppression, this noble mansion, whose hospitable doors were opened for

\* Mr. Erskine, p. 11. and p. 13.

the equal happiness of the wealthy and the poor, was to be laid prostrate with the dust ; even before the plan was drawn upon which another was to be built. Schemes of Constitutional Reform had been devised by Lord Chatham, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Flood, and by many others, but none had been generally approved. Mr. Fox, although a friend to the general principle of Reform, had uniformly objected to any particular plan. Even the Friends of the People were at variance upon the modifications of their plan, at the time when they precipitately pressed for an inquiry. This inability to devise a more perfect system, is the true panegyric of our constitution, as it stands. The very great men to whom I have alluded could not suggest any improvement which appeared even plausible in theory, or which it was not judged madness to oppose to the sure test of experience. Like the Athenian picture, when the public judgment is passed as to particular faults, the Constitution stands covered with marks of individual disapprobation ; but call the same public to discriminate its beauties, and these very marks of censure serve to note its perfections—the painting was the work of Parrhasius, and the wonder of the world.

Supposing therefore that Mr. Pitt was in reality hostile to the measures of Reform, which I do not believe, yet what had he to fear for his place by any constitutional efforts which might be made to effect it under circumstances such as these ? The

step of itself was of dubious consequence. No specific plan was pointed out, by which a change could be effected with the general concurrence.

The measure had been peremptorily rejected by the House of Commons, under every administration, and it was scarcely a favourite with the people. Often as it had been proposed, and as often as it had been frustrated, no administration had been shaken by the consequence. Under the existing crisis, innovation and experiment were absolutely dangerous. Yet, with all these means for defeating; with all these grounds for opposing the motion; with reason and experiment before his eyes, a man like Mr. Pitt is supposed to have plunged this nation into a war with France, which might shake the continuance of his power—and this, to avoid a measure which he could have laid quietly to rest by the previous question.

To conceive that Mr. Pitt acted from such views, is to suppose him actuated by some desperate phrenzy, and not “that masterly skill and boldness, without example,” which Mr. Erskine is pleased to fancy. It is to suppose, that he set the universe in motion to destroy an insect which lay gasping within his grasp.

Such must be the conclusion which would impress itself upon every sober mind, if the object of the  
Minister

Minister had been merely to defeat the labours of the Friends of the People; and if those other societies, to whom Mr. Erskine alludes, had been influenced by that honest zeal for obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, through the constitutional interposition of the Legislature, which he asserts. Taking therefore his own positions for granted, the motives which he assigns for the conduct of the Minister are wild and incredible.

But if Mr. Erskine's suggestion is found to differ widely from the fact; if there did exist a set of desperate and flagitious men, whose object was to overturn and confound our customs and our laws; who, in contempt of civil tranquillity and the general happiness, were determined to effect the ruin of the Constitution, by every possible means; was it not the duty of the Executive Government to frustrate their projects? •

This question involves the consideration of the expediency of the Royal Proclamation issued 21st May 1792, which is the next public measure that is arraigned by Mr. Erskine. I shall therefore first prove that it was a step called for from the situation of our affairs at home. I shall, in the next place, shew, that it had no necessary connexion with the affairs of France; and that if any did exist in reality, it was created by the machinations and intrigues

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of the Government of that country, with the design of producing a revolution here.

Among the persons to whom I allude, as influenced by rebellious views, I do not mean to include those gentlemen who formed themselves into a society, under the invidious name of the Friends of the People. It has seldom happened to any institution to have been so generally and fully condemned as this Association has been. It is not merely the judgment of the friends of Government, and of all who are unconnected with party, that is against them. They were discountenanced by the very head of that opposition to which they cling. The measure was disapproved by Mr. Fox, and he refused to become a member. Many of the most respectable persons who had joined it, withdrew their names soon after its first sitting. But it was reserved for the Club itself to pronounce the final sentence upon its own weakness and inefficiency. It has addressed the Public, to announce the suspension of its functions, as unable to attain the object it proposed. Still I will not dispute that these gentlemen were attached to the principles of our Constitution; but I must insist, that the institution itself was attended with infinite mischief.

It gave encouragement and countenance to the establishment of Societies, whose object went far beyond

beyond theirs. As the Friends of the People professed to accomplish the same Reform which the Revolutionary Societies pretended, their example served to dissipate that alarm at the proceedings of the latter, which the body of the people must otherwise have felt. For some time at least the Nation looked up to them as to the head of these Associations, and conceived that they had a sufficient pledge against desperate designs, in their property, their integrity, and their wisdom. Owing to their having made a common cause with Republicans, the latter were enabled to work more securely under the shelter of their reputation. Mr. Erskine indeed continues to make a common cause between them still. He insists that the views of these Societies were honest though irregular, and calls any dread which was professed of their designs a “ contemptible pretext.”

If the proceedings of these Societies had remained secret, yet still a cautious statesman ought to consider all Associations, constituted and influenced as they were, to be an object of well-founded alarm. A set of profligate individuals, destitute of character, and desperate in fortune, associate the young, the inexperienced, and the ignorant, with the avowed design of political innovation. Are we to conclude, in contradiction to all human experience, that the views of such men were directed to the public good? Are we to suppose that men who

have disregarded the social duties of domestic life ; who have dissipated their private fortunes in riotry and imprudence ; who have spurned at all moral distinctions ; and contemned that fair opinion of their neighbours which constitutes the invaluable blessing of character ; are at once to render themselves reflecting, grave, and upright statesmen ? Upon what grounds can we build the hope that such men are to become thus regenerate in their public capacity ? From what preternatural working are we to conclude that the serpent has shaken off at once its poisonous and desperate qualities ; or whence is it that we are to be deluded into the belief that it has changed its nature, when it has cast its slough ?

Yet such are the men whom we are called upon to consider as being uninfluenced by all the dazzling concomitants of power. We are commanded to believe, that a number of individuals are deeply interested for the public welfare, who have scandalously trifled with their own ; that their design is to reform the State, who have proved themselves irreclaimable ; that the sole object of these strolling braggart politicians is to respect the general welfare ; to cherish universal prosperity ; to spread the pure and cheering light of freedom ; and in contempt of private gains, to look for their reward in the happiness of their fellow-subjects alone.

Surely

Surely it cannot be uncharitable to suppose that the real views of this description of men were more congenial to the tenor of their lives; that their immediate hope was public confusion; and their ultimate motive, private rapine.

But when we come to examine their proceedings, *part* of which are now before the Public, it seems to result as an irrefragable conclusion, that their only object must have been to overturn the Constitution, and root out Monarchy from amongst us. Their encomiums upon the French Revolution, with all its bloody consequences, were unlimited. Their strictures upon all Monarchical Establishments were outrageous and undistinguishing. Crowned heads, whether vested with limited or arbitrary power, were branded with the common name of Despots. No exception made for the form of Government under which they lived; no saving-clause for Great Britain; but the Constitution misrepresented, vilified, and traduced. French manners, French appellations, and the system of French proceedings, were the idolatrous object of their imitation, and of their public and private applause. Embassies were openly sent to France, with proffers of assistance and schemes of fraternization. In an address which accompanied one of them, the vengeance of Englishmen was denounced against their Sovereign, if he should dare to unite with the Combined Powers who were at war with France!



Is it possible to believe with Mr. Erskine that this conduct originated from “ the honest but irregular zeal of Societies instituted for the Reform of Parliament ? ” If it be so, it is singular that their patriot and peaceable zeal should wear the everlasting uniform of resistance and rebellion. If their design was to obtain a constitutional object by constitutional means, what are we to think of their understandings ? What unheard-of monster must that Reform be, which was to issue from the brains of such blundering declaimers ?—A Reform devised by men who were unable to give a plain and honest exposition of their general views ; who intending to work only a renovation in the Constitution, by an appeal to the Legislature, libel every one of its ‘ constituent parts, and give colour to the supposition that they are Revolutionists and Traitors. To view them in such a light would be to view them as Babel-builders, who attempted to raise an edifice that should reach the Heavens, and who were visited with confusion in punishment of their presumption.

But to suppose their zeal to have been so invariably verging towards Democracy, in contradiction to their designs, would be an insult both to their understandings and to ours. It is notorious that their addresses and resolutions, and the very minutes of their sittings, were either devised or corrected by a man, distinguished for his cunning ; for  
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the clearness of his conceptions, and the accuracy of his language. It is farther authenticated by their journals, that they were so cautious as to take the advice of Counsel to ascertain how far they might approach with safety towards the verge of Treason.

Yet even these weighty circumstances are the least prominent evidence of their guilt. Their general conduct unequivocally displayed the dispositions of these Societies, and was meant to excite a kindred feeling throughout the country. But they took more decided means to poison the principles of the people, and to promote their final success.—The Rights of Man, a book evidently Republican, the professed object of which was the overthrow of our Constitution, was considered as their Khoran. It was circulated by them with an industry superior to that which any common interest in its dissemination could sustain. No quack has ever demonstrated such ingenuity and perseverance in advertising his deleterious nostrum, as was used by the disciples of Thomas Paine, for the diffusion of his doctrines. Mr. Erskine himself allows that “many  
“libels were undoubtedly written by turbulent and  
“misguided individuals.” But the observer forgets to remark that these libels were composed by some of the Members of these very Societies; that they were circulated, and recommended, and enforced by resolutions passed at their meetings. As these libels were thus mentioned and adopted by the  
C 4 Clubs,

Clubs, who can doubt of the poisonous source from whence they sprang, or that the opinions of these Societies were not in concord with those of the authors ?

Neither did their mischievous machinations finish here. Their profelytes were to be increased by affiliated Clubs among the lowest ranks of the community. Men were called upon to promote a Legislative Reform, who, from the habits of their life, could neither comprehend the abuses, or the principles, or the common movements of our Government ; who could not even understand or connect the very system which they were called upon to support, much less to weigh its probable effects upon all those nice and complicated relations which must exist in a civil form of Government. What could such a mischievous mockery of deliberation mean ? What, but that these poor uninformed misguided persons would have been as useful in the camp, as they were insignificant in the council ! —that while thus intoxicated and swelled with blind zeal and fancied information, they were to be crimped into the service of this desperate Condottieri. For this purpose arms were certainly put into their hands, and missionaries traversed the country to feed their enthusiasm and keep them firm to their purpose \*.

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\* Mr. Erskine opposes to such manifest proofs that revolutionary designs were entertained by these Societies, the verdict  
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When such was the situation of the country, it would have been criminal in the Executive Government to have remained longer passive. The tran-

of three Juries. I entertain all possible respect for the decisions of a Jury, and I will not discuss the propriety of those acquittals to which this gentleman alludes. The proceedings are before the Public, and every man may determine for himself. But it is certainly rather too much for a gentleman of Mr. Erskine's professional experience, to adduce a Verdict of Acquittal as a conclusive proof of innocence. The humanity of our Law leans strongly against a criminal conviction; it regards with severe and scrutinizing jealousy every species of proof which does not bear directly in support of the accusation which is preferred. Both Courts and Juries will hold themselves bound by this rule so firmly, that if the evidence be defective in the smallest step, the prisoner is acquitted, although little doubt can be morally entertained of his guilt. The proof adduced in the late Trials for High Treason was a long chain of circumstantial evidence, which required considerable talents to collect and retain. If the mind of the Jury could not contain and apply this immense body of evidence, they were in the right to acquit. But such weakness or fallibility can only exonerate the accused from the legal consequences of guilt. It happens that Mr. Erskine's inference of positive innocence is less justifiable in the cases to which he alludes than in any other which could be easily adduced. The persons accused might have entertained the design of overturning the Constitution, and yet, as that was not the crime charged in the indictment, they might have been properly acquitted. The Treason specified in the indictment was a design to take away the life of the King; and the evidence adduced to substantiate it, was the attempt to introduce a Republican form of Government in Great Britain. Now it might happen, that although the Jury were satisfied that the proof of the latter was complete, yet they might think that the inference of Treason was by no means just.—Or, in other words, as no positive intention to commit an act of personal

tranquillity of the Empire, the morals and energies of the People, were in danger of annihilation. Even if a Revolution could not be immediately compassed, yet the high and noble spirit which animated the mass of the community was threatened with destruction. It is the sacred love of our Constitution, the inalienable confidence in our Liberties, which has confirmed us a free and powerful people. Proud of this pre-eminence in the form of our Government above the world, we have in truth become superior to the rest of mankind, by the belief that we were so. But remove this elevated notion which animates, consoles, and inspires us;—let Englishmen cease to make distinctions between the faults of their Governors, and those of their Constitution;—let them treat the latter with irreverence, and patiently listen to an amplification of its defects; and the very main stay of our prosperity is loosened and gone.

sonal violence against the Sovereign was proved, the Jury might have conceived that the bare intention to establish a Commonwealth could not be considered as conclusive evidence of a design to murder the King. This point was laboured with considerable eloquence and effect at the trials. A design to establish a Republican form of Government, where criminal intentions against the King's life are negatived, is considered by our laws as nothing more than dangerous Sedition. If the majority of verdicts is to decide the seditious intentions of the leading Members of these Societies, Mr. Erskine would be beaten by a very large majority on the poll.

It was to prevent these dreadful consequences, both immediate and remote ; to awaken the People to a sense of their danger; to raise a spirit of loyalty in the Nation, which might counteract such dangerous and anarchical designs, that the Royal Proclamation was issued on the 21st May 1792. I have a very respectable authority to support me in the assertion, that some measure was necessary to tranquillise the agitated mind of England at this period.—It is Mr. Erskine himself.

Mr. Erskine \* declares, that “ the avowed object” of the Friends of the People “ was to bring the very cause that Mr. Pitt had so recently taken the lead in, fairly and respectfully before the House of Commons ; in hopes, as they declared, *to tranquillise the agitated part of the Public ; to restore affection and respect for the Legislature, so necessary to secure submission to its authority ; and by concentrating the views of all Reformers to the preservation of our invaluable Constitution,* to PREVENT THAT FERMENTATION OF POLITICAL OPINION WHICH THE FRENCH REVOLUTION HAD UNDOUBTEDLY GIVEN RISE TO, FROM TAKING A REPUBLICAN DIRECTION IN GREAT BRITAIN.”

Mr. Erskine then admits that the apprehension lest the fermentation of political opinion might take

a Republican direction in Great Britain, was well founded. Whether this fermentation existed in Societies, or in the Community at large, is immaterial to the present consideration. The mischief was in existence, and *Mr. Erskine* and the Gentlemen who constituted the Society calling themselves *the Friends of the People*, considered it as an evil requiring a remedy. It was for these reasons that their Society was instituted, and the means by which they purposed to affect it, was *a concentration of the views of all Reformers*. If Mr. Erskine and his friends thought some measure requisite “to “ tranquillise the agitated part of the Public,” was the Administration of the Country to regard the danger with the sleepy eye of sluggish indolence ?

At a period so evidently dangerous, that gentlemen felt the alarm in their private stations, and rose up to stop the spreading mischief, was the superadded obligation of public duty to render the Cabinet inactive ? The one issued a Proclamation ; the other instituted a Society.—The measures were different, but the principle and object were the same.—It was a well-founded ALARM of danger to the Constitution, and a laudable exertion to repress it. There is some distinction indeed between the conduct of the Government and that of the Friends of the People in other respects.—The latter were Alarmists in their Society, professing the contrary every where else ; but the Administration professed their apprehensions

prehensions in every station where they acted, and in every place in which they were called upon to declare their opinions. The Proclamation was successful in rallying the Nation to defend its Constitution; but the Friends of the People have abandoned their sagacious plan of “concentrating the views of all Reformers to the preservation of our invaluable Constitution.”

If Ministry had neglected to issue this Proclamation, what other measure remained for a statesman to try? Mr. Erskine admits\*, that the “irregularities and excesses of Libellers were for a time overlooked by Government.” The experiment, therefore, of suffering these libels to dwindle into oblivion, by a contemptuous disregard of their consequence, had been attempted, and found ineffectual. After such a trial, the Cabinet must either have remained idle at the helm during that period of danger which called forth Mr. Erskine and his friends in an alarm, or they must have advised the Sovereign to appeal to the loyalty and good sense of his People, for their own security, and his immediate protection.

If the issuing of this Proclamation was a measure dictated by sound policy, its wisdom cannot be depreciated because it was issued with the concurrence of



a most respectable part of the Opposition. According to vulgar conception, such approbation from avowed adversaries ought to strengthen our conviction of its propriety. But it is said that their assent was wrung from these gentlemen under the pressure of ill-grounded apprehensions ; that these veteran Statesmen, who had so long acted with Opposition, had been panic struck by Mr. Pitt into a coincidence of opinion ; that he had contrived by a dextrous juggle to disunite the Whig Party, and thus ensured the success of his designs.

Those who are acquainted with the private history of that period, know that it was rather the Minister's wish to unite than to divide the Opposition. Sensible of the importance of unanimity at home during the dangerous and impending crisis, he sought to admit the Leaders of that Party into a share of the Government. A negotiation was set on foot for the purpose ; and it might have been successful, if Cæsar had not deemed it more glorious to pass the Rubicon than to admit of a superior.

The consequent separation of the Duke of Portland, of Earls Spencer, Fitzwilliam, and Mr. Windham, from Mr. Fox, is branded by Mr. Erskine\* with the appellation of a "*delusion*," and it

\* Page 17.

is pronounced “ a blot in the annals of an enlightened age, and of a free country.”

If the noble triumph of public zeal over party spirit ; if a love to the country predominating over habitual attachments ; if a noble wish to save the Constitution, and a sacrifice of private disgusts and long-confirmed prejudices to the attempt, be a delusion, or can appear a blot in the annals of a free country ; let this transaction bear the opprobrious censure. But unless the blind and indiscriminate zeal of party has quite overwhelmed the good, old, honest sense of Englishmen, homage must be paid by a grateful Nation to the wisdom, the integrity, and patriot feelings which dictated the measure. Let Mr. Erskine glory to cling to the weather-beaten pieces of the wreck of Party, but let it be the prouder boast of those who left the ruin, that they have saved their country.

Mr. Erskine is as much mistaken with respect to the time, as he is in the motives which gave rise to this disunion. It did not originate with the Minister, or at the period when the Proclamation was devised. It had taken its rise long before, in a radical difference in opinion as to the consequences of the French Revolution. It had even been manifested to the Public a considerable time previous to the date of the Proclamation, which is stated as the first Ministerial step taken to promote the alarm of the Public, and the disunion of the Whig Party.

The first open conflict between the several parts of the Opposition was in the debate of the Canada Bill. The speech and conduct of Mr. Fox on that occasion can never be forgotten. The purport of the Bill was to establish a Civil Government for a dependency of the Empire. It is no unfavourable concession to Mr. Fox, that his sentiments upon the French Revolution had no connexion with the object of the Bill. To bestow such ardent encomiums on that event, during the fermentation of political opinion which it had excited in this country, was at least imprudent. The applause of such a man as Mr. Fox might have inflamed the turbulent and tumultuous spirit already existing in the bosom of Great Britain, and excited the unwary and unthinking to emulate the sanguinary and precipitate conduct of France. But, granting that this was a speculative and improbable result from his speech; there was one more immediate, which the Right Honourable Gentleman could not fail to foresee. He must have perceived that he was about to contradict and hazard a rupture with an old and valued friend; with a gentleman who had delivered sentiments upon the subject widely different from those of Mr. Fox, but with that manliness, ingenuity, eloquence, and overwhelming force, which shewed that his heart, and mind, and conscience went wholly with his opinion. Mr. Burke had published his Thoughts on the French Revolution considerably prior to the debate. If occasion  
had

had called upon Mr. Fox to contradict the doctrines which were avowed by the book, no complacency to an individual should have compelled his silence. But to travel out of his way, that he might thus publicly contradict a friend to whom he owed so much, was to inflict a bitter wound upon a great and upright mind. It was to offer up as a sacrifice the man with whom he had so long acted, to novel opinions ; to a new, and I will add, a dangerous friendship.

If the Proclamation was a measure required for tranquilising the Country, it is unjust to attribute its origin to sinister views. If it spread the alarm against French principles, it was a necessary measure of defence against their progress. It originated not from a wish to interfere with France, but from the conduct of those who sought to apply her maxims and example to our internal Government.

The Proclamation did not contain a single sentence which alluded to the French Government, or to the internal situation of France \*. If we must not make such provision for our domestic safety as

\* This is admitted by Mr. Erskine himself, p. 31. although in another place he calls it a " covert Libel by our Ministry upon France," p. 28. and declares that it has " sown the seeds of that War which we have ever since been unfortunately reaping," p. 17.

we may deem expedient, lest it should give umbrage to that country, where is the principle to stop? We dare not hang a French traitor, a French robber, or a French assassin; not even warn British subjects against their pernicious example, lest we should sow the seeds of hostility, by seeming to reproach that nation with the treasons, murders, rapines, and confiscations which have disgraced her Revolution! If this be so, there is indeed no Peace which can degrade us below our present state of humiliation. We are become a Province to this republic, and are no longer an Imperial Kingdom.

But even France herself has been more just to our rights as an independent Nation, than those who have undertaken her defence. If she had “mildly” complained of this act of national police,” as she is supposed in one place by Mr. Erskine to have done \*, I should contend, with another admission of Mr. Erskine in my favour, that she would have acted in a manner which, “in strictness she would” have had no right to do †.” M. Chauvelin’s Note of June 1792, however, gives no countenance to the supposition of Mr. Erskine. It is an anxious disclaimer on the part of the French Government of any connexion with those Frenchmen who menaced our national tranquillity. It contains a general renunciation of all right to interfere in the

\* Page 28.

† Page 31.

internal concerns of the country, as militating against every principle of justice. It is an exculpation of France, not a complaint against the conduct of Great Britain.

Viewing the whole tenor of the French correspondence, I am persuaded that this Declaration was neither true nor sincere; but although France did not hesitate to act on the principle, she did not dare to avow it.

There is other evidence still more strong than this correspondence, that she has never considered the Proclamation as a legitimate cause of War with this country, nor regarded it as a symptom of hostile designs in our Cabinet. The Manifesto which accompanied the Declaration of War, in February 1793, rakes up every other ground of accusation against this country, which is maintained by Mr. Erskine; but it passes by the Proclamation without notice. It supposes our enmity to France and her freedom, to have commenced on the imprisonment of Louis XVI. a period three months subsequent to that in which the Proclamation issued.

It is, I hope, by this time evident that the supposition to which Mr. Erskine refers the real causes of the War is destitute of foundation;—that the Minister could neither feel motive nor necessity for embarking this country in all the dangers incident to hostility, that he might defeat a Motion for

a Parliamentary Reform, or crush such an insignificant Association as the Friends of the People.

✱ It is, I trust, equally clear to every moderate man, that the Proclamation was a measure necessary to preserve this country from internal tumults. That being so, France was not justifiable in regarding it as a measure aggressive on our part, and she has never affected to consider it as such. What private chagrin she may have felt at this proceeding, I shall not stop to inquire. She has never urged that it was a libel on her friendly and pacific views towards this country, although Mr. Erskine has. Still she may have beheld the measure with all the agony of disappointment. It was well calculated to frustrate her predetermined machinations against the British Constitution.

I am prepared to admit that the Proclamation had some share in promoting that alarm against French designs and French principles which was felt, in 1792, by all who were good and wise among us. But I cannot think so meanly of the good sense of England, as not to believe that the feeling derived much greater strength from the virtuous affections of a loyal and noble people judging for themselves upon facts as they arose. That it was the conduct of the seditious at home, and the increasing miseries and crimes of France, which converted that generous sympathy with which we  
beheld

beheld her first emancipation, into a mingled emotion of horror, disgust, contempt, and anxiety. I will also readily agree that this virtuous and well-founded alarm (for I am not afraid of the word) reconciled this country to the War: but I insist, and will prove, by that correspondence to which Mr. Erskine refers, as containing the grounds and causes of the present hostilities, that the War was provoked by the French. If the War therefore was inevitable on our part, the alarm should have enabled us to prosecute it with spirit, but cannot with justice be said to have produced it.

But it seems that the intentions of our Cabinet must have been hostile, because we refused our mediation between France and the Combined Powers. Mr. Erskine should have assigned reasons for his assertion, or pointed out some authority by which it is supported. Statesmen have in general considered a question of mediation as one of mere expediency. That the Power requested to undertake it was at liberty to accept or refuse the office, from a consideration of her own dignity, her immediate interests, and the probable result of her interference. If these reasons should induce her to decline it, her refusal could neither be considered as a mark of hostility, nor as a departure from the strictest neutrality.

I will not dwell upon the indecency of an application, which called upon Great Britain to me-



diate between France and “*a grand Conspiracy.*” If we had acted upon such a call, we should have decided the question at the very outset \*. Those who recollect the posture of affairs at this time, and the public declarations of either party, will be convinced that any mediation unsupported by arms must have proved unavailing. It will not be contended by Opposition that we should have interfered with arms in support of the Combined Powers, since it is the very crime which they impute to Administration. Such an interference in behalf of France would have been to act in direct opposition to the immediate interests of Great Britain. It would have been to coalesce with a great and preponderating nation, her inveterate and necessary enemy, for the subjugation of her own natural and hereditary allies. She would thus at once have overset that Balance of Power which is the prime

\* Well might our Ministry reply to this Note, “that His Majesty will never refuse to concur in the preservation or re-establishment of Peace between the other Powers of Europe, by such means as are proper to produce that effect, and are compatible with his dignity, and with the principles which govern his conduct: *but the same sentiments which have deter- mined him NOT TO TAKE A PART IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF FRANCE,* ought equally to induce him to respect the rights and the independence of other Sovereigns, and especially those of the Allies; and His Majesty has thought that in the existing circumstances of the War now begun, the intervention of his counsels, or of his good offices, cannot be of use, *unless they should be desired by all the parties interested.*” Official Correspondence, p. 13.

source of her prosperity, and which it has cost her so much blood, anxiety, and treasure to maintain.

I am not aware that any call of justice or humanity can require from one nation such a sacrifice of its own interests for the happiness of another. I am sure that neither Brutus, nor Cato, nor Aristides, nor Cleomenes, nor any other Greek or Roman Patriot, to whom it is the fashion to appeal, would have tolerated the dogma. As an Englishman, I deny that any Administration can be justified in the slightest deviation from those ancient principles and maxims upon which our permanent prosperity and safety depend, in order that they may gratify our romantic and momentary feelings.

But let the case be possible : Was the existing situation of France within it ? Were we to abandon that ancient system which had invariably regulated our political conduct in continental affairs ; to disregard those alliances which we had long formed, and which were cemented by a perpetual interchange of benefits ; to form a new and monstrous coalition with France—and this, that we might secure to her the continuance of a State which no wise and honest man could regard without an aching heart ? Were we to offer up this lavish, costly sacrifice, that the French Monarch should be continued in captivity—that the Nobility and Clergy of France should be proscribed, plundered, exiled, or murdered—that

the Christian Religion should be put to silence by the public law, and Atheism openly proclaimed—that the solemn engagement of marriage should be disregarded and trampled under foot—that an union which was to give children to the State, and upon which every domestic virtue and private comfort must depend, should be loosened with as little ceremony as a drunken connexion formed in a brothel\*?

Is it for the preservation of these sacred and invaluable blessings that Great Britain is required to have broken her neutrality? Or was it an all-sufficient and all-compensating good that France should be told that she was free—That, amidst the clanking of chains and the dying groans of persecuted wretchedness, her People might listen to rants on Liberty and exhortations to Murder? And this, that a few impious Curès, factious Avocats, ravenous Attornies, and desperate Adventurers, might have the power of confounding and overturning all divine and human rights!

When Mr. Erskine censures the Cabinet for not having acted in this manner, he adopts the very principles which he reprobates so strongly in the

\* Whatever may be the justice of Mr. Burke's sentiments respecting the danger of concluding a Peace with the Regicide upon any terms, his description of the calamitous situation of France is as true as it is eloquent.

Combined Powers. He recommends it to one Sovereign State to interfere in the civil concerns of another, with the sole view of advantage to the latter \*. Such doctrine neither is nor can be approved,

\* Left it should be supposed impossible for a gentleman of Mr. Erskine's talents to advance this doctrine, I will quote his own words :—

“ If instead of inciting and encouraging the Princes of Europe  
 “ to invade France, for the purpose of dissolving her Establishment,  
 “ we had become her security against their invasions,  
 “ whilst her Revolution should be confined to her own limits and  
 “ subjects, it is not possible to believe, upon any reasoning from  
 “ human life or experience, that Europe could have now been  
 “ in its present condition. But if, instead of this *passive* and  
 “ *merely preventive* influence, Great Britain, in the true spirit  
 “ and in the full ripeness of civil wisdom, had felt a just and  
 “ generous compassion for the sufferings of the French People ;  
 “ if, seeing them thirsting for Liberty, but ignorant of the  
 “ thousand difficulties which attend its establishment, she had  
 “ taken a friendly yet a commanding part ; if, not contenting  
 “ herself with a cold acknowledgment of the King of the  
 “ French, by the insidious forms of an Embassy, she had become  
 “ the faithful, but at the same time the cautious Protector of  
 “ the first Revolution ; if she had put the rein upon Europe  
 “ to prevent its interference, instead of countenancing the Confe-  
 “ deracy of its Powers against it, the unhappy Louis might now  
 “ have been reigning, according to his oath, over a free Peo-  
 “ ple ; the horrors of succeeding Revolutions might have been  
 “ averted, and much of that rival jealousy, the scourge of both  
 “ Nations for so many centuries, might, without affecting the  
 “ happy balances of our mixed Constitution, have been gra-  
 “ dually and happily extinguished.”

“ The Powers that then existed in France, however insincere,  
 “ or however unsettled in their authority, having proffered the  
 “ continuance of Peace, and having asked our mediation with  
 “ the Emperor, upon the renunciation of conquest and ag-  
 “ grandisement,

approved, either by the law of Nature or of Nations. It would overfet in its consequences the internal supremacy of every independent State, which is the first axiom of the latter code. Such an interference is undoubtedly allowable, where it becomes necessary for the absolute safety of a State. It is allowable in time of peace, as a measure of pure self-defence, unmingled with any views of inordinate ambition. It is justifiable in time of war, as a means of annoyance to the enemy.

But to interfere with France as she was then divided into parties, would have been to intermingle and league with her private factions. We must have esti-

“ grandisement, and upon the disavowal of interference with  
 “ the Governments of other Countries, WE SHOULD HAVE  
 “ TAKEN THEM AT THEIR WORDS. The possible insincerity  
 “ of the offer, or the weakness of perhaps an expiring Faction to  
 “ give it efficacy, would have only added to the predominancy  
 “ of Great Britain. The magnanimous and beneficent conduct  
 “ of a powerful Nation possessing a free Government, admitting  
 “ the right of another Nation to be free, offering its counte-  
 “ nance to *rational* Freedom, lamenting the departure from its  
 “ true principles, and demanding only security against its in-  
 “ fluence to disturb herself, would have been irresistible in its  
 “ effects. Amidst the tyrannies of quick succeeding Factions,  
 “ the united force of this Country and her Allies exerted upon  
 “ such a sound principle, *and thrown into the scale of any Party*  
 “ *in France that might have been willing to preserve the Peace,*  
 “ *would have given to that Party an over-ruling ascendancy.*” —  
 Mr. Erskine’s Pamphlet, pages 46, 47, and 48.

The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,  
 And these are of them.

mated

mated their numbers, their strength, and their principles. We must have interfered with a view to give efficacy to the general will of the Nation, without any means to discover it. The Revolution in 1789 was said to have emanated from that will. The lame and crippled Monarchy of 1791; the Republican Constitution of 1792; the Domination of Robespierre; the Restoration of the Girondists; and the present Constitution, have in their turns predominated in the ephemeral orb of French popularity, and have been successively proclaimed *the will of a great Nation determined to be free.*

What is the result of these reflections? That Great Britain could not have accepted the proffered mediation, unless to her own disgrace, and in opposition to her best interests; that neither policy, humanity, nor the love of freedom could have justified the experiment, which must have been unavailing to France; inefficacious to restore peace to Europe; and which might have precipitated this country into unnecessary war.

The next part of our conduct which Mr. Erskine represents as manifesting a disposition hostile to France, is the recal of our Ambassador upon the imprisonment of the King of France, and of his unfortunate family.

The mere recal of an Ambassador is in itself no ground for hostilities. Every independent State  
may

may either send, or recal, or discontinue him, as best suits its convenience, policy, or pleasure. It is the privilege of the Power who sends the Ambassador that it should be entitled to do so, and not of that to which he is sent. If the former chooses to forego the right, the latter is not entitled to complain.

But it may be urged, that although the return of Lord Gower was not a sufficient cause to justify the commencement of hostilities between France and England, yet as the latter had usually kept an Ambassador at Paris, it was a step which manifested her coldness and aversion.

Let it be recollected, however, that the question to be proved by Mr. Erskine is, that this circumstance is decisive of the intention of our Cabinet to force the Country into a War with France, solely on account of the King's imprisonment. Great Britain was neither bound, nor ought she to have paid any compliment to those miscreants who had seized upon the Throne. If deep and sound reasons of policy exist to justify the recal, it was no act of hostility, and it cannot be considered as a wanton insult offered with a design to provoke the War. France therefore could have no ground for the complaint, and it is to be remembered that she did not complain of it.

This measure, instead of being hostile to France, and a proof that we wished to engage with her in war, was directly the reverse. It was necessary for the sake of our internal tranquillity ; for the sake of France herself ; and for the sake of our neutrality.

It was necessary for the tranquillity of Great Britain ; because the Republican Faction had derived new spirits from this lamentable event. The turbulent were to be checked ; the well-affected consoled ; and the wavering confirmed. If such an atrocious circumstance, happening at this juncture, had passed unnoticed by our Government, what must have been the general sensation ? Who could blame the People, if they had regarded the imprisonment of their own Monarch with something less than indifference, when he himself, surrounded by his confidential servants, had treated such an event as a trivial and unmomentous occurrence ?

But the recal was a measure of tenderness to France herself. She received by it a serious warning from a free and enlightened Government, of the dangers which followed upon her frantic steps. It was the only authorised voice with which Great Britain could endeavour to reclaim her to the blessings of tranquillity and freedom. Neither confederating with her enemies, nor interfering with her councils, nor leaguings with her factions, it was a solemn



solemn appeal to her judgment and her fears. Happy would it have been for that “blood-battered” Country if she had listened to the prophetic admonition. If, pausing at the remonstrance of a People who had learned subordination at the price of Rebellion, and extracted Freedom from the hazards of a Revolution, she had pondered on the wild havoc which she had made; if she had sought for the cure of her ancient oppressions in more humane and more effectual measures than treasons, massacres, pillages, and perpetual Revolutions.

Yet, cogent as such reasons must have operated towards the recal of our Ambassador, the step was demanded at least as strongly to preserve the Nation from the probability of instant hostilities with France. The massacres of the 10th of August, and those of the ensuing September, proclaimed that neither age, nor sex, nor distinction, could operate as a protection against the indiscriminating bloody rage of an infuriate populace. If the dignity of Great Britain had been violated at that period, in the person of her Ambassador; if his life had become a sacrifice to the jealousy, the caprice, or the appetite for human blood, of a lawless banditti, who ranged the streets, and ransacked the houses of Paris, deaf to the cries of mercy, and unrestrained by the calls of authority; if, like the Spanish Plenipotentiary, he had been covered with insult by the National Assembly itself,

self, for an humble attempt to save the Sovereign of France (the head of his master's House) from the guillotine, War would have been inevitable and instantaneous. And this not a War for any grand object of national interest, but a War to satisfy a point of honour; a sacrifice of innocent lives to an unprofitable, although an important punctilio.

If these, or any of these reasons operated with the Ministry in the recal of Lord Gower, are they not more than sufficient to authorise the measure? What right has any man to assign improper motives for a proceeding which can be supported upon others that are more prudent? Administration has uniformly disavowed any intention to quarrel with France on account of the revolutionary changes in her Government. In every one of those papers which passed between our Cabinet and that of France, it was anxiously stated that this Country neither had intermeddled nor intended to interfere with her internal concerns.

The truth of this assertion was never expressly denied by France. Yet Mr. Erskine and the Opposition bring forward a charge against Ministry, that they commenced the War with the concealed and dangerous design of establishing the ancient Government in that country. An object which France herself has never ventured to assign as the ground of hostilities on the part of England.

It is with a view to establish this conclusion that Mr. Erskine examines that Correspondence which Ministry have given to the Country, as containing the causes of the War—I mean the Correspondence between Lord Grenville and Monsieur Chauvelin. The grounds of the present War, as stated there, are, 1st, the Decree of the 19th of November; 2d, the threatened attack upon Holland, which included the opening of the Scheldt; and 3d, the danger to the Balance of Power in Europe, —a danger founded upon the consideration of the wanton aggressions made by France upon neutral territories; upon her extensive and rapid conquests in the dominions of those Powers with whom she was at War; and upon her ambitious projects of ‘annexing them in perpetuity to her own empire.

According to Mr. Erskine, not one of these grounds can be justly assigned as the cause of the present War.

I shall shortly detail such parts of the Correspondence as relates to each of them; and I shall give the reasons upon which I found a conclusion which is directly in opposition to that which Mr. Erskine has laboured to prove. It is, that these were the real grounds upon which England entered into the War; that it is a War which was first provoked, as well as first declared, by France; that it could  
not

not be avoided by this Country by any possible means, without the absolute sacrifice of her own dignity, of the rights of her Allies, and of her immediate safety.

While it was the interest of France to disavow any right of interference by one Nation in the interior concerns of another, M. Chauvelin took care to have the principle notified to our Government \*.

So self-evident was this principle conceived to be, and so material to a good understanding between the two Nations, that in the Note which was transmitted to Lord Grenville upon the subject of the Proclamation issued 21st May 1792, M. Chauvelin repeats a part of his declaration of the 12th, and for the second time unequivocally abjures this right †.

Yet,

\* “ But this very pride, so natural and so just, is a sure  
 “ pledge to all the Powers from whom she shall have received  
 “ no provocation, not only of her constantly pacific dispositions,  
 “ but also of the respect which the French will know how to  
 “ shew at all times for the laws, the customs, and all the forms  
 “ of Government of different Nations.”—M. Chauvelin’s  
 Note, May 12th, 1792. Official Correspondence, p. 2.

Again, in the same Note, p. 3. “ For England is free like-  
 “ wise, because she determined to be so; and assuredly she did  
 “ not suffer other Powers to attempt to compel her to alter the  
 “ Constitution she had adopted; to lend the smallest assistance to  
 “ rebellious Subjects: or to pretend to interfere, under any  
 “ pretence, in her interior disputes.”

† His words are: “ If certain individuals of this country  
 “ (Great Britain) have established a Correspondence abroad,

Yet, notwithstanding this professed declaration and protest against all interference of one State with the domestic concerns of another upon any pretence whatever ; notwithstanding the anticipated and acknowledged sense that England felt jealous lest France in her revolutionary zeal should interfere, with a view to disturb her internal tranquillity ; the National Convention pass the Decree of the 19th of November 1792,—a Decree by which they declare their readiness to assist with the whole strength of the French Nation, all people who shall rise against the lawful Government to which they are subject.

Upon a representation of the uneasiness which this Decree afforded to Great Britain, the subjoined Explanation is offered\* by the Ambassador of the French.

Unsatisfied

tending to excite troubles therein ; and if, as the Proclamation seems to insinuate, certain Frenchmen have come into their views, that is a proceeding wholly foreign to the French Nation, to the Legislative Body, to the King, and to his Ministers ; it is a proceeding of which they are entirely ignorant ; which militates against every principle of justice ; and which, whenever it became known, would be universally condemned in France.”——Official Correspondence, p. 5.

\* “ If a real alarm has been occasioned by this Decree, it  
 “ can have arisen only for want of understanding its true sense,  
 “ The National Convention never meant that the French Republic should favour insurrections, should espouse the quarrels  
 “ of a few seditious persons, or, in a word, should endeavour  
 “ to excite disturbances in any neutral or friendly country  
 “ whatever : Such an idea would be rejected by all the French.  
 “ It cannot be imputed to the National Convention without do-

Unsatisfied with such a vague exposition, his Majesty's Ministers renew their remonstrance, and state the particular conduct of France, upon which they justify their having entertained those apprehensions which they express \*.

To this remonstrance, M. Le Brun's paper, so often quoted by Mr. Erskine, contains the reply. It neither disavows nor explains the specific charges of confederacy with the seditious of Great Britain, which the British Cabinet assign as the more immediate grounds of alarm at this decree. It contains, indeed, a metaphysical explanation of that law,

“ing it injustice. This Decree then is applicable only to those  
 “people, who, after having acquired their liberty by conquest,  
 “may have demanded the fraternity, the assistance of the Re-  
 “public, by the solemn and unequivocal expression of the ge-  
 “neral will.”—M. Chauvelin's Note of 27th December 1792. Official Correspondence, p. 16, 17.

\* They are thus stated. “The first is that of the Decree of  
 “the National Convention of the 19th of November, in the  
 “expressions of which all England saw the formal declaration of  
 “a design to extend universally the new principles of Govern-  
 “ment adopted in France, and to encourage disorder and revolt  
 “in all countries, even in those which are neutral. If this in-  
 “terpretation, which you represent as injurious to the Conven-  
 “tion, could admit of any doubt, it is but too well justified by  
 “the conduct of the Convention itself; and the application of  
 “these principles to the King's dominions has been shewn un-  
 “equivocally by the public reception given to the promoters of  
 “sedition in this country, and by the speeches made to them  
 “precisely at the time of this Decree, and since, on several  
 “occasions.”—Lord Grenville's Letter, Dec. 3<sup>d</sup>, 1792. Official Correspondence, p. 19.

which differs nothing in substance from that which they had formerly given\*.

It requires neither eloquence to state, nor ingenuity to draw the just inference from the conduct thus held on the part of France. While it was her interest to disclaim the principle of interference with the internal Government of other Nations, she anxiously disavowed it. But when inflated by victory she has determined to extend her dominions from the Alps to the Rhine, she sets up this very same prin-

\* “ We have said, and we desire to repeat it, that the Decree of the 19th of November could not have any application, unless to *the single case*, in which *the general will* of a Nation, clearly and unequivocally expressed, should call the French Nation to its assistance and fraternity. *Sedition* can certainly never be construed into *the general will*. These two ideas mutually repel each other, *since a sedition* is not and cannot be any other than the *movement* of a *small number* against the Nation at large; and THIS MOVEMENT would CEASE TO BE SEDITIOUS, PROVIDED ALL the members of a Society should AT ONCE rise, either to correct the Government, or to change its form *in toto* for any other object.

“ Thus, when by this NATURAL interpretation the Decree of the 19th of November is reduced to what it truly implies, it will be found that it announces nothing more than an act of the general will, and that beyond any doubt; and so effectually founded in right, that it was scarce worth the trouble to express it. On this account, the Executive Council thinks that the evidence of this right might perhaps have been dispensed with by the National Convention, and did not deserve to be made the object of a particular Decree. But with the interpretation which PRECEDES it, it cannot give uneasiness to any Nation whatever.”—Translation of M. Le Brun’s Paper, Official Correspondence, p. 34.

ciple

ciple as essential to secure her success. Sensible that it would be impossible to purchase the neutrality of England until she should execute this ambitious project, France resolved to cut out work which might employ her at home, and thus prevent her interference on the Continent by interrupting her internal tranquillity. With this view, she encouraged sedition here, by every species of artifice which could effect her purpose. All the speeches of her Ministers and of the leading Members of her Legislature, enforced the necessity, and anticipated the impending establishment of a National Convention in Great Britain. With this same design, embassies from the lowest and vilest incendiaries of this Kingdom were received with respect and adulation by the French Government\*. A Correspondence was entertained with the disaffected through the intervention of her Ambassador, and a general league and covenant was proclaimed on the part of France, with all Revolutionists and Rebels, by the Decree of the 19th of November. When England complained of this Decree, an explanation is offered wholly unsatisfactory.

\* The trials of the Defenders in Ireland establish it beyond doubt, that France had interfered with the internal concerns of this Empire long previous to the rupture between the Countries. It was her object to separate Ireland from Great Britain. With this view, French principles of Government were inculcated by her emissaries among the lowest class of the People, and part of that Oath which they administered to their proselytes was, "*to be true to the French.*" It was at this period that France endeavoured to ensure success to that invasion which she has so recently endeavoured to carry into effect.



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It was unsatisfactory both in its form and in its substance.—In its form; as it was the explanation of the Executive Council, who had no authority whatever to make it—for, being the act of the French Legislature, the law could be explained only by those who had the power to pass it. It was unsatisfactory in its substance; because, although it affected to limit the grant of assistance to cases in which it was called for by the solemn unequivocal expression of the general will, yet it reserved to France the right of determining when a Nation had so manifested its will. It recognised the principle, therefore, in its most extended sense. France was to be sole judge of the propriety of her own interference. She might construe a request from the Revolution Society, or a Meeting at Chalk Farm, or from a few British renegades at Paris, into a solemn annunciation of the general will. The extent and magnitude of the People's crime, was publicly proclaimed as the stipulated and ascertained price of her assistance. No other limit was placed to her interposition, but her own opinion, upon that conduct which her interest or convenience required\*.

Against

\* It is remarkable, that in the very paper in which France affects to renounce the principle, she incautiously exercises the right. "When every explanation calculated to demonstrate the purity of the intentions of France; when all peaceable and conciliatory measures shall have been exhausted by her; it is evident that all the weight, all the responsibility of the War, will fall sooner or later on those who shall have provoked it. It will, in fact, be nothing *but a War of the Administration*

Against such an explanation the Cabinet again remonstrated, and urged specific grounds of complaint against the Decree. But they received the very same answer a second time, accompanied with a notable addition, that the Law was a nugacious truism, unnecessarily enacted by the National Convention. Let it be farther recollected, that the Executive Council applied, in the interim between this remonstrance of England and their reply to it, to the Convention for an explanation of this nugacious truism; but the French Legislature refused either to repeal or explain it, and passed to the order of the day.

Such is the general outline of this transaction respecting a Decree, which even Mr. Erskine admits, that “no considerate person can justify\*.” It is for the good sense of the People of England

‘ *ministration alone*, against the French Republic; and if this truth could for a moment appear doubtful, IT WOULD NOT, PERHAPS, BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR FRANCE SPEEDILY TO CONVINCE OF THIS *a Nation*, which, in bestowing its confidence, has never renounced the exercise of its reason, or its respect for truth and justice.”—M. Chauvelin’s Note, 27th December 1792. Official Correspondence, p. 17.

Well might our Cabinet reply, “That England cannot consider such an explanation as satisfactory, but that she must look upon it as a fresh avowal of those dispositions which she sees with so just an uneasiness and jealousy.”—Lord Grenville’s Letter of 31st December 1792. Official Correspondence, p. 20.

\* Page 40.

to determine whether the Rulers of France shewed any disposition in this Negotiation to accommodate the point in difference between the two Countries. I appeal to the same Tribunal, whether it was an affair of such trivial importance, that Ministry should have rested satisfied without an explanation. If it was really a Decree without a meaning, as the Executive Council pretend, ought not France, if her designs were friendly, to have removed at once the uneasiness of Great Britain upon the point? Could it have cost her any sacrifice of time, of trouble, or of honour, if the National Convention had explained or repealed this law? If it was of no importance to France, what are we to think of the amicable dispositions of a country, who could refuse to expunge offensive nonsense from her code, to gratify a Power with whom she is supposed to desire the continuance of Peace? Our Cabinet could entertain no doubt respecting the designs of France, when they contrasted her former eagerness to anticipate our complaints on the score of interference, and her present refusal, when a complaint had been actually made. It was her own judgment upon her own intentions. For, as she held forth her former willingness to explain as demonstrative of her friendly views towards this Country, she must have regarded her present denial as being equally indicative of hostile intentions.

But if the Decree was of importance to the interests of France, it was, on that very account, an  
object

object of the most anxious jealousy to Great Britain. It could have been of no other importance to France, than to set every Nation at variance with itself; every order of Society in array against each other. To encourage discontent, faction, rebellion, and anarchy through all the neighbouring countries, that she might invade, divide, annex, lay waste, or govern them, just as it suited her pleasure. If Great Britain, therefore, to whom the general interests of Europe never can be a matter of indifference, had regarded a Nation acting upon this principle as she would have done a thief in the night, who kindles up a general conflagration, that he may plunder the confused and distressed victims of his mischief, would she not have proceeded upon principles of the soundest policy? But after having experienced an obstinate refusal to explain the Decree by those who had the power to do it; after having listened to a silly explanation from those who had none; after receiving no answer whatever to the direct charge of facts upon which she founded her opinion that the Decree was peculiarly pointed at herself;—could national honour (if such a feeling continues still known to Britons)—could a sense of her own immediate tranquillity suffer her to continue unprepared for a War, which was rendered inevitable, unless the aggressions of France had been instantly done away.

These reflections arise upon the face of the Correspondence. But when it is added, that pending  
the

the very process of Negotiation; at the very time when France was vaunting forth insidious professions of friendship, of respect for other Governments, and of forbearance of all conquest, the Decree of the 15th of December 1792 was passed; is it possible to doubt of the insincerity of her explanation, and the gigantic extent of her ambitious designs?

The speech that prefaced this Decree is declared to be the opinion of the re-united Committees, which included all the leading men in the French Legislature. It was received with the most rapturous approbation by the National Convention, and was followed by a Decree, which was immediately put in execution throughout the conquered countries. They need no comment. I subjoin them in a note. If they do not speak to the good sense and manly spirit of this Country with more impressive force than any eloquence can supply, that hour of national infatuation is arrived, which must overwhelm us in one common destruction\*.

The

\* M. Cambon, in the name of the re-united Committees, proposed, amidst the loud and universal plaudits of the Assembly, "That the French should establish revolutionary power, and that they should sound the tocsin in all the territories they entered, declaring that *they would destroy all the ancient constituted authorities*, and THAT ALL MANKIND SHOULD BE SANS-CULOTTES."

The Assembly decreed,

"1. *The Generals in all these countries which are or may be occupied by our Armies, shall immediately proclaim, in the*  
" name

The conduct of France with respect to the meditated attack upon Holland, and the opening of the Scheldt, is even more unreasonable and insulting than that which we have already explained.

Upon

“ *name of the Republic, the abolition of the ancient Constitutions, Nobility, Taxes, Feudal Rights, real and personal servitude, the exclusive right of hunting and fishing, and all privileges. They shall declare to the People, that they bring them Peace, Liberty, and Fraternity.*

“ 2. *They shall declare, at the same time, that the constituted authorities are suppressed. They shall proclaim the Sovereignty of the People. They shall convoke the Primary Assemblies to elect Judges and provisional Administrators, and shall post up the proclamation of this decree.*

“ 3. *No one can be admitted into the Primary Assembly, nor be elected a Judge or Administrator, if he has not taken an oath to be faithful to Liberty and Equality; and if he has not renounced all the privileges which he enjoyed. The Members of the existing Administrators and Judicial Powers cannot be nominated in the first election.*

“ 4. *The National Convention shall appoint Commissioners, chosen from their own body, to go and fraternize with the People.*

“ 5. *The Executive Council shall also appoint Commissioners for the same end, and to regulate the sum due to the Republic for the expences they have incurred.*

“ 6. *They shall give an account of their proceedings every 15 days.*

“ 7. *The French Republic shall keep an account of the expences it has been at, and shall make arrangements for the payment of these expences.*

“ 8. **THE FRENCH NATION DECLARES IT WILL CONSIDER AS ENEMIES THOSE PEOPLE WHO, REFUSING LIBERTY, SHALL ENTER INTO ACCOMMODATION OR NEGOTIATION WITH THEIR TYRANTS.**

“ 9. The



Upon the 18th of June 1792, M. Chauvelin had promised, in the name of France, that all the Allies of Great Britain (of whom the most intimate was undoubtedly Holland) should be safe from aggression, so long as they observed an impartial neutrality\*.

Yet, in a short time afterwards, this upright Government, in whom we are required by Mr. Erskine to place our unbounded confidence, did not scruple to make her promise give way to her ambition; “ she openly violated both the territory  
“ and the Neutrality of the Republic, (Holland,)  
“ in going up the Scheldt to attack the citadel of  
“ Antwerp, notwithstanding the determination of  
“ the Government not to grant this passage, and  
“ the formal protest by which they opposed it†.”

“ 9. The French Nation swears never to lay down its arms  
“ until the Countries which they have entered shall be free,  
“ and their Liberty secured.”

The 8th branch of this Decree is even more exceptionable than that passed on the 19th of November. The latter professed to pay some respect to the will of the People, but this article expressly enacts, that they shall have no other Government than that which the French chuse to prescribe for them.

\* “ He hastens, at the same time, to declare to him, conform-  
“ ably to the desire expressed in that answer, (Lord Grenville’s  
“ Note of the 24th May preceding,) that the rights of all the  
“ Allies of Great Britain, who shall not have provoked France  
“ by hostile measures, shall be by him no less religiously re-  
“ spected.”—Official Correspondence, p. 11.

† Lord Grenville’s Letter, 31st December 1792.—Official Correspondence, p. 20.

Great

Great Britain remonstrates against this aggression. She takes measures unusual to the general forms of her Government, which prove the greatness of her alarm. The Parliament is summoned to meet on the 12th December 1792, although it had been prorogued to February. The King explains to the other branches of the Legislature his apprehensions of the conduct of France. He assigns as the very grounds of his complaints, the same facts which the Cabinet had previously notified to the French Government. He points out the necessity of taking precautions, and of making preparations for defence; and declares these to be his reasons for having called his Parliament so suddenly together. If France, therefore, had wished to avoid a Rupture with Great Britain, she had sufficient reason to see that this Country was determined to enforce her demands. Yet M. Chauvelin, in a Note dated December 27th, 1792, does nothing more than REPEAT, for France, that *promise* which France had so recently *broken*.

The *aggression* itself, namely the opening the Scheldt, is *avowed* and *justified* \*.

Great

\* “ The British Government being thus set at its ease upon these two points, no pretence for the smallest difficulty could remain, except as to the question of the opening of the Scheldt; a question irrevocably decided by reason and by justice; of small importance in itself, and on which THE OPINION OF ENGLAND, and PERHAPS OF HOLLAND ITSELF, IS SUFFICIENTLY KNOWN, to render it difficult,

“ SERIOUSLY,

Great Britain exposed this avowal in a most manly, forcible, and, I will add, pacific and moderate paper\*.

A reply is made, which was that transmitted in M. Le Brun's Communication of the 8th of January †, and is in substance the same with that of the preceding December.

There

“ SERIOUSLY, to make it the single subject of a war. Should,  
 “ however, the British Ministry avail itself of this last motive,  
 “ as a cause of declaring War against France, would it not, in  
 “ such case, be probable, that its secret intention must have been,  
 “ at all events, to bring on a Rupture; and that it made use,  
 “ at the present moment, of the vainest of all pretences to colour  
 “ an unjust aggression, long ago determined upon ?”—M. Chau-  
 velin's Note, 27th Dec. 1792. Official Correspondence, p. 17.

\* Lord Grenville's Letter of the 31st December 1792. It is too long to be inserted in such a publication as the present. But it is well worthy of the national attention. As a State Paper it is equally dignified, explicit, and convincing. It is to be found, p. 19 of the Correspondence.

† “ WE REPEAT IT: this question is in itself of little mo-  
 “ ment. The Ministers of Great Britain conclude that *it serves*  
 “ *only to prove more clearly, that it was brought forward merely*  
 “ *for the purpose of insulting the Allies of England, &c.* We shall  
 “ reply with much less warmth and prejudice, that THIS  
 “ QUESTION IS ABSOLUTELY INDIFFERENT TO ENG-  
 “ LAND, AND THAT IT IS OF LITTLE IMPORTANCE TO  
 “ HOLLAND; but that it is extremely important to the Bel-  
 “ gians. That it is *indifferent to England it is not necessary to*  
 “ *prove*, and its *trivial* importance to Holland is evinced by  
 “ this fact, that the productions of the Belgians pass *equally by*  
 “ *the Canals* which terminate at *Ostend*. Its great importance  
 “ to the Belgians is proved by the numerous advantages the  
 “ port of Antwerp presents to them. 'Tis therefore on ac-  
 “ count

There is no substantial difference between them, unless the reason inserted below is to be accounted such \*.

To

“ count of this importance, ’tis to restore to the Belgians the  
 “ enjoyment of so precious a right, and not to offend any one,  
 “ that France has declared herself ready to support them in  
 “ the exercise of so legitimate a right.

“ BUT IS FRANCE AUTHORISED TO BREAK THE  
 “ STIPULATIONS WHICH ARE OPPOSED TO THE  
 “ LIBERTY OF THE SCHELDT? If the Rights of Na-  
 “ ture, and *those of Nations, are consulted*, not France alone, all the  
 “ Nations of Europe are authorised to do it—THERE CAN  
 “ BE NO DOUBT OF IT.”—Official Correspondence,  
 pages 34 and 35.

That is, France had a right to break and annul all the Treaties which Great Britain, the Emperor, and Holland had made with each other since the year 1648. There could be no doubt of it!

\* “ If we consult public Law, we shall say that it ought to  
 “ be nothing; but the application of the principles of the Ge-  
 “ neral Rights of Nations to the particular circumstances in  
 “ which Nations are placed with regard to each other; inso-  
 “ much that every particular treaty repugnant to such prin-  
 “ ciples can only be regarded as the work of violence. We  
 “ moreover add, in relation to the Scheldt, that this Treaty  
 “ was concluded without the participation of the Belgians.  
 “ The Emperor, to secure the possession of the Low Coun-  
 “ tries, sacrificed, without scruple, the most inviolable of  
 “ rights. Master of these fine Provinces, he governed them, as  
 “ Europe has seen, with the rod of absolute despotism; re-  
 “ spected only those of their privileges which it imported him  
 “ to preserve, and destroyed or perpetually struggled against  
 “ the rest. France enters into war with the House of Austria,  
 “ expels it from the Low Countries, and calls back to free-  
 “ dom those people whom the Court of Vienna had devoted  
 “ to slavery; their chains are broken; they re-enter into all  
 “ the rights which the House of Austria had taken away from  
 “ them.

To these reasons, which are supposed to justify the infraction of a solemn Treaty, the following offer is added\*. It is quoted by Mr. Erskine to evince the moderation of France, and to call down the censure of all wise men upon the insolent conduct of the British Cabinet.

Let us, if possible, repress our indignation at this tissue of flimsy sentiment and audacious misstatement, and examine it with coolness.

It is asserted that Holland considered this question as of little importance to her. This is advanced

“ them. How can that which they possessed with respect to  
 “ the Scheldt be excepted; particularly when that right is  
 “ only of importance to those who are deprived of it.”—  
 M. Le Brun’s Paper, Official Correspondence, p. 35.

\* “ She (the French Republic) does not wish to impose  
 “ laws upon any one, and will not suffer any one to impose  
 “ laws upon her. She has renounced, and again renounces  
 “ every conquest; and her occupation of the Low Countries  
 “ shall only continue during the War, and the time which may  
 “ be necessary to the Belgians to ensure and consolidate their  
 “ liberty; after which they will be independent and happy;  
 “ France will find her recompence in their felicity.

“ *When that nation (Belgium) shall be found in the full enjoy-*  
 “ *ment of liberty; when its general will can lawfully declare*  
 “ *itself without shackles; THEN, if England and Holland*  
 “ *shall attach some importance to the opening of the Scheldt,*  
 “ *they may put the affair into a direct negotiation with*  
 “ *Belgia. If the Belgians, by any motive whatever, consent to*  
 “ *deprive themselves of the navigation of the Scheldt, France*  
 “ *will not oppose it; she will know how to respect their inde-*  
 “ *pendence, even in their errors.*”—M. Le Brun’s Paper.  
 Official Correspondence, pages 35 and 36.

by

by men who could not have forgotten the efforts of the Emperor Joseph to open the Scheldt, in 1784. At that period Holland had scarcely escaped from the effects of her war with Great Britain: yet so far was she from regarding the design as an object of indifference, that she ventured to encounter the whole unbroken force of Austria to oppose it. At that period, also, France did not consider the question as irrevocably decided by reason and justice against the States General; for, notwithstanding the close alliance then subsisting between the Courts of Versailles and Vienna, she interfered to preserve this privilege to the Dutch. She conducted the very negotiation by which the mouth of the River was again closed, in conformity to the Treaty of Westphalia \*.

The opinions of the Dutch respecting the importance of the measure may be estimated by the

\* It may be said that the conduct of the Monarchy of France cannot be urged to make good a charge of inconsistency against the Republic of France. Those who may resort to such an argument, are not aware of the conclusion which they will establish against themselves. If a change in her form of Government can justify a Nation in altering her conduct towards other independent States, it will justify such States in an interference to prevent it. It would then become a measure of self-defence for every foreign Power to speculate upon the probable result of every domestic innovation in the territories of her neighbours; and to promote or repress it as it seemed most likely to preserve or destroy those Treaties which connected the countries together.

overflowing gratitude with which they repaid the interposition of France. The influence of the latter became unbounded over her councils and her conduct: and the reunion of Holland with Great Britain, although loudly called for by the interests of both, was protracted to a more distant period. Neither was it without good reasons that Holland felt thus deeply interested in claiming the observance of the Treaty of Munster. The opening of the Scheldt would have transferred the whole mart of Germany from Amsterdam to Antwerp. Its uninterrupted navigation would have prepared a broad highway into the very heart of the States General for every power in possession of Austrian Flanders. Holland, therefore, had a right to insist upon retaining this privilege, as one intimately connected with her commercial interests, her internal security, and founded upon the first principles of justice. Upon this last, because it was the industry and embankments of her people which had rendered the river navigable for vessels of considerable burden; and it would have been the ultimate refinement of cruelty to convert her own industry into a means to reduce her prosperity and endanger her safety.

The reasons which induced France to interfere, that she might close the mouth of the Scheldt in 1784, and open it in 1792, are obvious and consistent. It was the same system of national aggrandisement

disement which has been the darling object of the French nation under every change in her Government and councils. In 1784, Brabant was annexed to the Emperor's dominions. In 1792, it was considered as an appanage of France. In the former situation an influence over Holland was to be preferred to the prosperity of a country which belonged to the rival power of Austria. But when France had reduced that fair and fruitful country under her own dominion, (as it must have continued had she even permitted it to exist as a separate Republic, formed under her direction and protected by her power,) her views were varied by the consequent variation of her interests. The increase of wealth, commerce, and population in Belgium, was the increasing prosperity of her own subjects, and the direct augmentation of her immediate power. The opening of the Scheldt led to all this. It secured the attachment of the Flemings; and it commanded an immediate entrance into Holland. By this master-stroke of politics, France would have acquired an absolute dominion over the States General, in the room of such a precarious influence as had been recently destroyed by the interference of Prussia and Great Britain.

If it was of such importance to France, therefore, to establish the free navigation of the Scheldt for her own aggrandisement; and of such momentous consequence to Holland, for the protection



tection of her trade and independence, to prevent; could it be decently said that it was a matter of indifference to England? Or must we be reduced to argue, at this period, that the increasing power of France, and the destruction of Holland, which is our frontier upon the Continent, are matters of no importance to the interests of England?

But were we even to allow that Great Britain had no right to interpose, that she might enforce the Treaty of Munster, as not being directly interested in its preservation; surely, unless the law which is to regulate the conduct of the two Powers is as unequal as that between conqueror and conquered, France had no right to interfere that she might violate it. The grounds upon which she builds her justification are inconsistent with the Law of Nations, and all that has been advanced or written on the subject. If she insists upon a right to annul a Treaty, because she thinks it contrary to the general rights of Nations, she lays claim to the power, and contends for the privilege, to judge and arbitrate upon the validity of every Treaty between independent States.

Unjust and revolting as this claim appears, yet France has contrived to exceed its extravagance in the reasons which she has adduced to support it.

She

She insists upon her right to violate the Treaty of Munster, because it was concluded by a tyrannical (*i. e.* a monarchical) Government; and therefore the people could be no parties to it. The Low Countries being called back to freedom by the victories of the French, she declares that the Treaty is become null, and that the people of course enter into all their rights.

By this justification the French Republic assumes, therefore, *first*, The right to judge of the propriety of all forms of Government, which are established in territories distinct from, and independent of, her own. *Secondly*, To annul all Treaties concluded by such Powers as she is pleased to call tyrannical, howsoever drawn up, or by whomsoever guaranteed. *Thirdly*, To reward the people for their rebellion against such Governments, by a full and plenary indulgence against any obligation to perform them.

Are the people of this country aware of the consequences of such doctrine? Or is it possible that these ambitious madmen could have been aware of it themselves? It goes to shake the peace and tranquillity of Europe to the very centre; to destroy all political good faith; to dissolve all ties and obligations between kingdoms, and acknowledges no other law but that of the strongest. It annuls at once all Treaties in existence, whether entered into with France herself,

previous to her Revolution, with Austria, with Russia, Spain, Sardinia, Italy, Prussia, or Great Britain. It lays in a general claim, on behalf of France, to the exercise of a sovereign and uncontrollable right to intermeddle with the separate concerns of all other Powers. To break through their Treaties and Alliances, according to her own wild opinions of Government, of natural, and of diplomatic law. No matter whether they are in alliance or at enmity, or whether connected or unconnected with her; she has only to declare the article contrary to the rights of Nations, or one of the Governments to be tyrannical, and her right to interfere is pronounced indubitable.

As a proof of moderation, the Executive Council, however, promise, with the most solemn gravity, if we will but wait the return of peace, and until a Republic is established in Flanders, that she will allow the difference to become a matter of negotiation; and THEN,—What is to be the result? Why, if *Belgium consents* to deprive herself of the Navigation of the Scheldt, *France* will not *oppose* it: “She will RESPECT HER ERRORS!”

They desire us to forego our present commanding situation; to defer all explanation, until they derive strength from the conquest of their Enemies; and we are weakened by the defeat of our Allies; and then, if Belgium voluntarily yields up what it is evidently for her own interest and that of  
France

France that she should retain, France will not oppose it!

The THIRD cause of the War, was the total overthrow of the Balance of Power in Europe, by the conduct of the French in the countries which they had conquered. It is rather alluded to than detailed in the Correspondence through which I have attempted to follow Mr. Erskine.

Assuming, for the present, what Opposition has never ventured to deny, that it is of the utmost importance to this country to preserve an equipoise between the first-rate Powers in Europe; can it be alleged that it was not totally destroyed at the close of 1792? Flanders, Avignon, Savoy, Mentz, and all Germany to the Rhine, were in the possession of France. The rights of Holland were infringed, and her territorial safety was threatened by an army which hovered upon her frontier. Neutral territories within the German empire, with which France was at peace, were seized, and their property confiscated. A determination to annex and incorporate with the French dominions, every one of her conquests, was not only manifested, but openly avowed. The Correspondence with our Ministry declares her intention to erect Belgium into a Republic: a measure with which England ought not to have remained satisfied, even if it had been seriously designed.—As such a State would have been too

weak to resist the power of France, it would have been nothing more than a province dependent upon that country, with a separate Legislature.

The Decree of the 15th December, however, went infinitely beyond the Correspondence. It proclaimed the design to REFUBLICIZE all Europe. It abolished all public and private rights. It seized upon all property. It annihilated all established forms of proceeding. It reduced every order in the community to one common rank of wretchedness. It delegated one set of commissioners to levy tributes, under the pretence of regulating the sum due to the Republic for the expences it had incurred. It vomited forth another set to fraternize the people. It was not a mere decree of regulation for past conquests, but of provision for such countries as might be subdued in future. Under these circumstances, need we resort to the subsequent conduct of the French in executing the decree, to explain the intention with which it was passed?

Could Great Britain behold such conduct, and remain quiescent? Was she not called upon to remonstrate; and when remonstrances proved ineffectual, to enforce her complaints by arms?

Were our Ministry to have given credence to professions of peace and renunciations of aggrandisement, when the proceedings of France were  
one

one continued act of hostility and ambition? When we remonstrate against her aggressions, they are justified, and we are insulted with a declaration that we are not serious in our complaint! When we remonstrate again, the justification is renewed! France does not recede a single point from her claims. At the very period, nay, on the very day, when she professes peace and accommodation with England, she promotes, by more decisive measures, that very conduct against which this Country complains!

She laughs in the face of England, with a proposal which glares absurdity; and then braves her by stating: “ After *so frank a Declaration*, which  
 “ manifests *such a sincere desire of Peace*, his Bri-  
 “ tannic Majesty’s Ministers *ought not to* have any  
 “ doubts with regard to the *intentions* of France.  
 “ If her *explanations appear insufficient*, and if we  
 “ are still obliged to hear a haughty language; if  
 “ *hostile preparations are continued in the English*  
 “ *ports*; after having exhausted every means to  
 “ preserve Peace, *we will prepare for War, with*  
 “ *a sense of the justice of our cause, and of our efforts*  
 “ *to avoid this extremity. We will fight the English,*  
 “ *whom we esteem, with regret; but we will fight*  
 “ *them without fear\*.*”

War

\* M le Brun’s Paper, Official Correspondence, page 36.

To this our Ministry replied: “ In this form of unofficial  
 “ communication, I feel that it still may be allowed me to tell  
 “ you,

War therefore became inevitable, from the moment that this Declaration was made. It was in fact a Declaration of War itself; and if our complaints were well founded, (as Mr. Erskine almost admits they were\*,) France, having thus refused to satisfy them, had provoked the War.

“ you, without haughtiness, but also without disguise, that  
 “ these explanations are not judged satisfactory; and that *all*  
 “ the reasons which have occasioned our preparations still *subsist*.  
 “ I have already made these reasons known to you by my Letter  
 “ of the 31st December, in which I have stated, in precise terms,  
 “ what dispositions could alone contribute to the maintenance of  
 “ peace and good understanding. I do not see that it can be  
 “ useful towards the object of Conciliation, to continue to discuss  
 “ with you in this form a few separate points, on which I have  
 “ already made known to you our sentiments. If you had any  
 “ explanations to give me in the same form, embracing all the  
 “ objects, which I have mentioned to you in my Letter of the  
 “ 31st December, and all the circumstances of the present crisis,  
 “ with respect to England, to its Allies, and to the general  
 “ system of Europe, I should still willingly lend myself to it.

“ I feel, however, that in answer to what you say on the  
 “ subject of our preparations, I ought to inform you in the  
 “ most express terms, that under the existing circumstances, all  
 “ those measures will be persisted in here, which shall be judged  
 “ expedient for enabling us to protect the security, the tranquillity.  
 “ and the rights of this Country, to support those of our  
 “ Allies, and to oppose a barrier to views of ambition and  
 “ aggrandisement always dangerous to the rest of Europe; but  
 “ which become much more so, when they are supported by the  
 “ propagation of principles destructive of all order and society.”—  
 Lord Grenville's Letter, 18th January 1793. Official Correspondence, pages 37 and 38.

\* Page 40.

Ought

Ought our Cabinet *then*, or ought the People *now*, to be caught like gulls with frothy professions of amity, in opposition to this conduct? Is it to be wondered at, that our remonstrances to France, acting and explaining as she did, should wear the garb of coldness and suspicion? The Administration of this Country must have long seen that France had predetermined on a War with England. The People of England must see it, even if the principal Directors of France and her factions had not severally confessed it;—if we had not received the testimonies of Brissot, of Robespierre, and of Dumourier, differing in every thing else, but agreeing in this, to establish the fact\*.

If we contrast her professions with her conduct, those vety declarations of friendship upon which Mr. Erskine and the Opposition rest their opinion that England might have remained at Peace, ought rather to have increased than allayed our apprehensions. They could be regarded as nothing more than a syren note to lull us into confidence, and ensure our destruction in the moment of repose. Like the Mauritius bat, the Executive Council strove to increase our somnolence by the gentle flapping of their ominous wings,

\* Dumourier, in contemplation of a War with England, proposed to seize Maestricht, which is the key of Holland, in October 1792.—See his own Memoirs.



until they drank deep of our blood, even to our death\*.

The

\* Such is the situation in which Mr. Erskine represents France, as "undoubtedly solicitous for Peace," page 41; which he calls "a posture for amicable and commanding settlement," p. 42; in which he says, "that France was more sinned against than sinning," p. 39. He is speaking of this situation of affairs, when he says that we are now asking in vain for Peace, "upon terms, which, without War, were not only within our reach to obtain, BUT LEFT TO US TO DICTATE," p. 72.

Mr. Erskine recites the substance of His Majesty's Speech, "He states that the King was advised to repeat the same three direct charges against France which had been before made to her Ambassador, and upon the footing of these complaints to call upon the Country to enable him to augment our forces," p. 43. Yet in the very same page, when speaking of the 15th of December, three days subsequent, he says, "at this time the French Government had done no one act which even Ministers themselves considered as a foundation for War; since War was not even proposed in the King's Speech; but, on the contrary, the Correspondence, *not disclosed to the House, and which was going on at this very period*, continued to express THE MOST PACIFIC DISPOSITIONS." Mr. Erskine says, p. 47, that "we should have taken them (*i. e.* the French) at their words, because the possible insincerity of the offer, or the weakness of perhaps an expiring faction to give it efficacy, would have only added to the predominancy of Great Britain." Yet in p. 40 he had said, "neither do I seek to maintain that England should have rested secure from the explanation of the other points of difference, as they are explained in this Correspondence; much less that she should have relied upon the sincerity of them, or the durability of French Councils to give sincerity its effect." These remarks are wrung from me with reluctance. They are not made for the purpose of exciting

The labour of refuting Mr. Erskine's positions does not close with the proof that France is the aggressor upon the face of the Correspondence.— Although the causes of complaint which are stated in these papers should be sufficient to justify this Country in the assumption of arms, Mr. Erskine is resolved that they shall not be considered as the grounds upon which Administration embarked in the War. Notwithstanding the admitted neutrality of this Country, until the imprisonment of the unfortunate Louis; notwithstanding her subsequent conduct, until the whole Continent of Europe had suffered a Revolution, notwithstanding the nature of her remonstrances, and the uniform declarations of her Ministry; Mr. Erskine is determined to make the Cabinet a party to the Treaty of Pilnitz\*, and to prove that Mr. Pitt's object in the War was to crush Liberty in France, and to destroy the germ of a Parliamentary Reform at home. This is the shadowy Æneas, in pursuit of which our Turnus deserts the real toils and field of controversy.

*Talia vociferans, sequitur, strictumque coruscant  
Mucronem: nec ferre videt sua gaudia ventos.*

ing an insidious sneer against Mr. Erskine. They are necessary to shew into what inconsistencies and absurdities a gentleman of fine talents may be seduced, when he descends into the situation, and is actuated with the zeal of an Opposition partizan.

\* Administration have not merely denied that Great Britain had any participation in the Treaty of Pilnitz, but they have expressly asserted that it was entered into without their knowledge.

Mr.

Mr. Erskine urges in furtherance of this conclusion—that, if our Ministry had not proceeded upon other views than those which are contained in the Correspondence, and which could become the subject of negotiation with France; they would not have refused to receive M. Chauvelin as her Ambassador:—that they must either have attempted to compromise the causes of discontent by amicable arrangement; or, if that was impossible, they must have made them the instant foundations of War.

But, according to our Author, the Cabinet poached, with an hypocritical air, at game which they were afraid openly to pursue. They did nothing which, a real wish to accomplish their professed object would have required. They refused to negotiate; inasmuch as Mr. Fox's motion for an Address to His Majesty, “to appoint a Minister to be sent to Paris, to treat with the persons exercising provisionally the functions of Government in France,” was negatived by the House of Commons. They did not instantly declare War, since M. Chauvelin was not dismissed until the murder of the King of France was known in London.

The question, whether it would have been right to accredit M. Chauvelin as the Minister Plenipotentiary of France, was attended with no considerable difficulties. If we had done so, we should

have acknowledged the French Republic at once, and have sanctified the imprisonment of the unhappy Louis with the approbation of Great Britain. Humanity, justice, honour, and a sense of our internal dangers, should have made us pause before we adopted such a measure. The Revolution was so recent, and the commotions of France so violent and momentary, that it was a matter of doubt, whether our acknowledgment of the Provisional Government might not have involved this Country in all the mischiefs of War, instead of preventing it. There was no moral certainty that the messenger who bore from England an acknowledgment of the Republic should find a vestige of its forms in existence; or that a single individual who sustained its functions should remain safe from the unceasing decadence of the guillotine, to peruse the dispatch. Yet, notwithstanding such doubtful circumstances, if this refusal on the part of our Government had proved a direct impediment to Peace; if France had been willing to recede from her aggressions, and this formality had alone obstructed the way to Negotiation; Ministry might have been to blame, unless they had devised some means to remove it.

But, as the recognition of the existing Government of France was a matter of infinite importance to Great Britain, it was not to be wantonly thrown away. France was both willing, and did, in fact, negotiate without such an acknowledgment. She even

even reproached the British Cabinet for their attachment to forms, and considered the credence of her Ambassador as unnecessary to an explanation\*. If we are to believe Brissot, it was not the design of Mr. Pitt ultimately to deny the character of an Ambassador to M. Chauvelin.

It is obvious that M. Chauvelin himself did not consider his letters of credence as definitively refused on the 17th of January 1793, at which time a rupture with France seemed inevitable †.

But when the Executive Council and the National Convention displayed designs of the most enormous and dangerous tendency; when they refused to yield the most trifling concession to our energetic complaints; would it have been wise in Ministers to have abandoned the strong ground on which this Country stood, by an unnecessary and inconsiderate acknowledgment of their new Constitution? Ought they to have united France by discouraging the Royalists ‡? Ought they to have offended those

\* See M. le Brun's Paper, Official Correspondence, p. 33.

† See his Note, Official Correspondence, p. 39.

‡ I am aware of Mr. Erskine's declamation upon this subject, in reference to the unfortunate expedition to La Vendée. He has chosen to attack that point which is best settled in the Law of Nations, by the invariable practice of Nations, with a string of moral sentiments. If War could be reduced to a system of humanity, his opinions would be as wise as they are merciful; but while the Creator has formed man with his present appetites and

those Allies, in concert with whom England must act, by an unnecessary attack upon the principles in which the former had commenced the War? Ought they to have dissatisfied many wise and able men at home, who conceived the existing Government of France incompatible with the general safety of Europe? Ought they to have encouraged internal sedition, by admitting the lawful

and passions, it is idle to indulge the hope. It is impossible to extinguish the sources of contention, and, of consequence, the melancholy effects of war, which constitute its essence. It is shocking that the innocent should be involved with the guilty, but it is impossible to make a separation.

There never has existed a nation, which has not in some shape interfered with the internal concerns of those countries with which it has been at war, that it might divide their strength, and profit by their imbecility. It was the uniform custom of Athens and Lacedæmon in ancient Greece. It was practised by the Romans, in every quarter of the globe. England adopted it in the reign of Elizabeth, in favour of Holland, and of Henry IV. of France; and these examples are cited to us with approbation by the French. During the time of Queen Anne, we exercised it towards Spain, and especially in Catalonia. Spain herself exercised it against France, in the War of the League; and France, in her turn, pursued it against Charles V. in the affairs of Germany, and against England in the times of the Rebellion, as well as in the case of America. It was this principle which dictated the more recent interference of Prussia in the affairs of Holland. Yet this conduct has never formed a subject of complaint. These are the more immediate instances which occur to my memory. But if Mr. Erskine wishes to acquire the rudiments of political science, he may soon render himself master of many more.

inception of such a Government, even before it was enabled to raise its half-formed head from that horrid compost of treason, violence, and blood, in which it had been hatched?

But Mr. Erskine condemns the Cabinet, because it refused to negotiate. With what propriety the charge is made, when the Negotiation is actually before the Public, and quoted by Mr. Erskine himself, it is for the Nation to judge. It is treating the People of England too lightly, to conceive that the mere calling these official documents “ a “ Correspondence between the Secretary of State “ and the Minister of France,” can mislead their opinions as to its nature. If it be not in form and in substance a Negotiation, there is nothing ascertained in the diplomatic science.

It is urged, however, that Ministry could not mean to negotiate, because the House of Commons rejected the motion of Mr. Fox.

Notwithstanding that extravagance of praise with which Mr. Erskine loads the conduct of his leader, I shall not hesitate to affirm, that a more mischievous motion has seldom found its way to the Journals of the House. When it was made, Administration were attempting to effect in London, what Mr. Fox would have compelled the Nation to sue for at Paris. A Negotiation concerning the matter  
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in difference between the two Countries was actually carrying on in a manner and under circumstances more favourable to Great Britain than those which were proposed by Mr. Fox. The recognition of the French Government, upon the consequences of which I have already remarked, was reserved by the Cabinet as the purchase of Peace. It would have been conceded by Opposition as a preliminary unworthy of dispute. To move the House of Commons to intermeddle with a Negotiation upon a man's "*own wise forecast*," instead of a minute acquaintance with such extraordinary facts as can alone warrant the interference, is to violate the first principles of our Government. The Constitution has for wise purposes rendered the Sovereign the sole organ of national communication with other Powers. The prerogative of conducting Negotiations, of concluding Peace, and of declaring War, is placed in his hands. The motives which are to direct his conduct, and the facts on which these motives are formed, are necessarily concealed while the event is in dependence; and this, because they could not be declared to the People, without being also revealed to the Enemy.

When either House of Parliament intermeddles with this prerogative upon idle rumours, or ill-founded conjectures, their motions and addresses are calculated to give a false colour to the measures of Government; to raise the confidence of our

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Enemies;



Enemies; and to spread discontent among the People. They anticipate and prejudge the conduct of the Executive Power, without any knowledge of its proceedings, and without giving it an honest means to make its defence: The Servants of the Crown must either submit to a disclosure of circumstances which they are bound to treasure up in silence, or they must conceal them, at the hazard of murmurs at their misconduct, and the risk of losing the confidence of the Country \*.

But Mr. Erskine contends, that if our differences with France could not have been composed by Negotiation, War should have been immediately declared. He states this as a conduct “absolutely enjoined by common policy and common sense †.” I will admit that Ministry could have entertained but small hopes of Peace after the delivery of the French explanation of 27th December 1792. I

\* It is said by Mr. Erskine, p. 45, that “at the time Mr. Fox’s motion was made, the Correspondence between Lord Grenville and M. Chauvelin was *STILL KEPT BACK* from the House of Commons.” This, and some other insinuations, ought to have been spared by a gentleman of Mr. Erskine’s talents and situation. Those who consult the dates of the letters will perceive that nothing was brought to a conclusion at the time when the motion was made, and not until a month subsequent. It is impossible for Mr. Erskine to be so very ignorant, as not to know that the whole history of Parliament does not furnish an example of the Crown’s having laid an unfinished Correspondence before either House of Parliament.

† Page 40.

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look upon War to have been unavoidable after the receipt of M. Le Brun's Paper of the 8th of January 1793, which was communicated to our Government on the 13th. But that a Nation should be compelled to declare War upon the very moment when Negotiation terminates, is rather a novel doctrine. It is more a question of policy than of indispensable duty. There certainly did exist reasons which might have dictated this forbearance to Great Britain, and which were neither inconsistent with "common policy, common sense," or common humanity.

The fate of the unhappy Sovereign of France still trembled in the balance. His murder was not finally resolved upon as the necessary cement of the new Republic. A declaration of War from this Country might have inflamed the public mind, and furnished his Accuser-Judges with a pretext to rob him of his life. The situation of Great Britain, and a sense of her own interests, enforced this delay not less cogently than the claims of compassion for a suffering Monarch. The Austrians had not yet recovered from their defeat at Gemappe. An invasion of Holland was threatened by Dumourier, and the force of Great Britain was not in readiness to succour her. The merchants of England were possessed of property in the United States, of immense value. All their foreign bills were payable in Amsterdam. An army was to be raised for the

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protection

protection of our Ally, and sent to her assistance. It was also necessary that those British Subjects who were resident in France should have some time allowed, that they might withdraw themselves and their property from plunder, imprisonment, and confiscation. If the French had taken possession of Holland at that time, it would have affected the commercial interests of the Country with the most serious calamities. Hopes of Peace seem also to have been still entertained by our Government; but they were soon destroyed. France declared War against this Country on the 1st of February 1793, in the very midst of a Negotiation between Lord Auckland and Dumourier.

While such reasons existed to justify the procrastination of hostilities, it is surely not a little harsh and unreasonable to refer it to any latent motive which Administration has uniformly disclaimed. It is violence, and not ingenuity, to wrest a measure, which may be thus accounted for, into a proof that the object of the War was the restoration of Monarchy in France.

The Correspondence by which the Negotiation was carried on; the Speeches of the King from his Throne; the Addresses of both Houses of Parliament; the uniform Declarations of His Majesty's Ministers; and the conduct of France herself, contradict the supposition.

Against

Against such direct testimony, no arguments of inference or presumption, however ingenious, ought at any time to have much weight. If the foregoing exposition of the causes of the War and of the conduct of Administration be accurate, those used by Mr. Erskine are certainly inconclusive. The facts upon which he rests his proof are neither inconsistent with the avowed objects of the War, nor necessarily indicative of other designs. I have attempted to shew that the express object of every one of them was either to procure satisfaction from France, or to secure some advantage in the contest which she had rendered inevitable on the part of this Country. If the reasoning be just, that chain of likelihoods upon which Mr. Erskine suspends his assertion is burst in every link. Neither justice, nor candour, nor common sense, permit us to refer the conduct of Ministry to motives which they have anxiously denied, when it can be accounted for more rationally upon such views as they have uniformly professed.

As Great Britain was thus reduced to an alternative, either to undertake the War, or to lay her interests and her honour prostrate at the feet of France, it is laudable to recal the grounds of its commencement to the public recollection. The justice of our cause will administer consolation under defeats, and inspire us with courage to persevere in defiance of accidental calamity.

But if the situation of the Country be such as Mr. Erskine represents ; if the rash designs of the Executive Power have engaged the Nation in all the dreadful responsibilities of War without reasons to justify it ; is this a period at which a lover of his Country would seek to impress that opinion upon the hearts of the People ? Could any real Patriot endure to depress the national energies, when he conceived our situation to be such as the Author describes it,—“ left almost single as we are upon  
 “ the theatre of War ; ASKING FOR PEACE, BUT  
 “ ASKING FOR IT IN VAIN, upon terms which  
 “ were not only within our reach to obtain, but  
 “ left to us to dictate—Asking for Peace in France  
 “ under the pressure of a necessity created by our  
 “ own folly” \* ? ” If England be thus calamitous and prostrate, should the gloom which surrounds her be rendered more frightful by the heavy sense of that misconduct which is past and incurable ? When the continuance of War is inevitable, who is he that can gloat with rapture upon the errors of the Government, and croak his funestral auguries to quail the courage of the Country by a general disparagement of her cause ?

When the victory of Allia had opened the gates of Rome to Brennus and his Gauls, the Senate and the People did not consume their time in con-

\* Mr. Erskine's Pamphlet, p. 72.

demnation of the Fabii ! When the slaughter of Cannæ had depopulated her streets, the unyielding spirit of the vanquished scorned to give way to feelings which are alone incident to the coward's defeat ! The author of the disgrace was thanked that he had not despaired of his Country ! These were a noble People, who had minds worthy of the situation to which they aspired. A season of calamity was not with them a season for reviling and reproach. The commencement of War was a signal for unanimity at home. All parties and all factions subdued their mutual animosities, and united their exertions for the national success.

The minor circumstances which distinguish Nations from each other will fluctuate in the course of centuries ; but the great principles of human actions continue unchangeable. The lapse of ages, and the revolutions of science, can make no alteration in the essential characteristics which man has received from the hand of Heaven. The causes which wrought the glory of ancient Rome must ever lead to success in modern Europe. The same emollience of the national mind which has overturned Empires will continue to destroy them. It is not the age, the climate, or the local situation of a Country, it is not the dress or the complexion of its inhabitants which determine the fate of a Nation, or ascertain its elevation in a comparative scale of political importance with surrounding Powers : it is the conduct

duct of its Governors, and the brave or dastardly spirit of its People. Survey the changes of the habitable world to its remotest shores; scrutinize the prosperity and the decline of Nations through the vast vicissitude of events which diversify the page of history; they will be found to have proceeded from the converging operation of similar causes. Whether it be Rome or Carthage, France or Great Britain, nothing is changed excepting the name. The prognostics of national prosperity or decline do not vary more than those which indicate a wholesome or a destructive change in the constitution of different individuals. Courage, unanimity, and an honest pride in national pre-eminence, will ensure prosperity and power to every People whom they influence.—Divided Councils, indifference to public honour, and a selfish preference of Peace to every noble but arduous exertion, have plunged all Countries into greater and more immediate distress than the pressure which they endeavoured to avoid.

If a misrepresentation of the causes of the present War could effect nothing more than a change of the Ministry, I should have passed over the artifice with silent indifference. It is the professed object of all party-men to thwart every measure of Administration, that by exciting discontent among the People they may remove their rivals from the National Councils. The propriety of  
this

this conduct is questionable, even in times of Peace, and when there is a cause for honest dissatisfaction against the persons in power. But when the Nation is at War, it is beyond measure pernicious. The contest is no longer between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox; but between England and her Enemies. If the measures of the Minister are discomfited, it is this Nation that suffers, and our Rival who triumphs. If the Country is deluded into a wish for Peace, when she ought to prepare more vigorously for War; if she is plunged into discontent and dependency at the very time when she is called upon to prolong the struggle for her safety and her honour; what change of Ministry can work a recompence for the mischief that is done?

If an honourable Peace is not now<sup>\*</sup> within our reach, is this the season for exaggerated representations of the calamities of War, and meretricious pictures of the advantages of Peace \*. If a  
continuance

\* The reader will find some curious sentiments upon the propriety of innovation, and the misconduct of the late Parliament, pages 57 to 61. He may learn Mr. Erskine's principles of taxation, and peruse the following prophecy, from p. 61 to 63, that "if the Revenue gets to the point *which, without instant repentance and reformation, is fast approaching*; the Nation, by which I mean the great mass and body of the People, can have no longer any possible interest in the defence or preservation of their Government." He may also smile at an Utopian description of the consequence of Peace, which the author very properly denominates "an animating vision," from p. 65 to 67. These speculations might be  
excused



continuance of Hostilities is inevitable, or is to be avoided only by consequences more ruinous to the

excused and laughed at over a bottle of wine ; but alas ! when they appear in the shape which is now given them, they are calculated to inflame the People, and mislead them from the true point which they ought to consider. I cannot help quoting the following passage : “ I have been shocked in the extreme at  
 “ the late ostentatious triumph of the Loan by Subscription.  
 “ Very many persons, I am persuaded, have subscribed to it  
 “ from real motives of public spirit, and their exertion was a  
 “ most seasonable and critical relief to the State ; but, passing  
 “ by the condition to which Ministers have reduced their  
 “ Country, when public spirit may be really manifested towards  
 “ a Government, by a Loan, which would conduct a private  
 “ lender to a prison as an usurer ; what must be the reflections  
 “ of the middle classes, and the labouring poor of England,  
 “ upon the facility of taxation which this sort of patriotism  
 “ produces ? The rich lend their money at ten *per cent.* but  
 “ the public industry is mortgaged for the payment of the  
 “ interest, and every article of consumption is already almost  
 “ beyond the reach of the artificer and husbandman ; screwed  
 “ up, as they are, in proportion as they happen to come within  
 “ the vortex of this accumulating revenue.” P. 63. I will  
 not consider whether the labouring poor could have made this  
 reflection, if it had not been thus patriotically pointed out ;  
 neither shall I stop to detail its manifold absurdities. I shall  
 apply myself to assuage Mr. Erskine’s feelings upon the subject,  
 and, I trust, that I shall at the same time remove that miscon-  
 ception among the lower classes of the people which the author  
 has unwarily contributed to promote. The poor can have no  
 reason to conclude that the War is supported by the higher  
 classes merely for their own profit. The Subscribers, instead  
 of *gaining ten per cent.* are *losing fifteen per cent.* upon the  
 Loan ; and yet, such are the patriotic motives (wild ones no  
 doubt) which induced them to subscribe, that there have been  
*fewer forfeitures of original deposits in this Loan, than in the most  
 beneficial Loan which has been made during the War !* Indeed,  
 if I am rightly informed, there is not so much as one defaulter.

Country,

Country, are the people of England more likely to summon up a bold and daring spirit to meet those dangers which encompass them, by being told, “ that Peace is the parent of so many blessings, that all Nations ought to run into her “ embraces with an ardour which no distant or “ doubtful apprehensions should repel \* ? ”

If there is any one prepossession against the influence of which this Country ought more particularly to guard, it is an over-anxious and immature desire for Peace. Long experience should teach us how often our own impatience on this subject has been turned to our detriment. There is not a single contest in which this Country has been engaged in Europe, since the Restoration, where the advantages gained at the conclusion of Peace have been commensurate with our successes in the War. It is impossible to attribute this effect to any uniform superiority in the arts of negotiation on the side of our Enemies. It is our own want of perseverance, which will not suffer us to reap the fruits of victory. Artful men foment the national impatience at the inevitable calamities of War. The Minister, by whom the contest is commenced, is never suffered to conclude it. It is in this hope that the Opposition encourage the faults of our temperament, to our injury and disgrace. The Country is deceived, and its Enemies

triumph, that a Minister may be displaced, and his Rival seated in power.

During the whole of the present century, the fashionable Patriot-cry has been in accusation of every existing Ministry:—each succeeding Administration have been condemned to endure a temporary displeasure from the People in its turn: but still our prosperity has increased, and History has done justice to those merits which popular clamour had decried. The People of these kingdoms should beware how they consider vehemence and opposition as the test of sincerity or truth. It is no uncommon thing for the same men to pursue the very measures, when scarcely warmed upon the Treasury Bench, against which they had mainly vociferated when out of power: yet their conduct as Ministers was right; and it was better to cover their inconsistency with some flimsy pretext, than to persevere in error to the ruin of the Country.

After having thus mis-stated the real causes of the War, at such an unreasonable time, Mr. Erskine proceeds to point out the blindness and obstinacy with which it was pursued. I shall succinctly notice the several proceedings in Parliament to which he refers. They do not need a very serious examination: but I shall investigate, at some length, the steps taken by Mr. Wickham,  
in

in purfuanee of his Majefty's command, and the Negotiation of Lord Malmesbury. They will be found to contain the only questions which ought to influence our conduct at the present crisis.

If Miniftry were infincere in thefe attempts to negotiate, it is not a mere removal from office that fhould fatisfy the Nation. Thofe who could delude the Country on the fubject of its deareft interefts are unworthy of life. If the terms propofed by our Cabinet are extravagant and ridiculous; if we ought to fit down contented with more humiliating conditions; let thofe who can endure the thought fend a frefh fupplication to France, and let his Majefty's Minifters be removed from his Councils. I do not covet that the prefent Servants of the Crown fhould aft in that difgraceful fcene, where England, once fo nobly proud, muft lick the footftool of the Executive Directory.

I will admit that there are other matters upon which we ought to deliberate, befides the fincerity of Minifters, and the moderation of our propofitions for Peace. It may be a queftion, whether the Country is able to continue the War; or whether it is her intereft to fupport it until fhe can wrefte more moderate conditions from the Enemy. Thefe are very weighty fubjects, and are to be handled with the utmoft caution and care. The profperity of the Country, the happinefs of all Europe,

Europe, are involved in the consideration. The appeal is to the people of Great Britain. Neither pride, nor resentment, nor impatience, nor fear, should intermingle with a determination which embraces the most important interests of themselves and their posterity.

I shall make little comment upon Mr. Grey's Motion for putting an immediate stop to hostilities within twenty days after War had been proclaimed by the French; it was rather more culpable than that which Mr. Fox had made in the preceding December. The Negotiation between England and France had been submitted to the House previous to the time when this Motion was made. It was no longer a matter of conjecture; but it was reduced to incontestible proof that France had been the aggressor, and had provoked the War. The one Gentleman had merely moved the House of Commons to a rash interference with the duties of the Executive Power, without the possession of a single fact which could justify the interposition; but the other was pleased to attempt the same thing, after facts had demonstrated its impropriety.

Mr. Erskine cites his Majesty's Speech of 21st June 1794, as having "boldly and plainly avowed  
" the principle on which the War had been begun  
" and was to be prosecuted, viz. "*To oppose that*

“ *wild and destructive system of rapine, anarchy, impiety, and irreligion; the effects of which, as they had been manifested in France, furnished a dreadful but useful lesson to the present age and posterity.*”

The passage is quoted by Mr. Erskine as if it were a transcript from his Majesty's Speech. The world will feel surprised when they are told that it is not to be found there.

The passage, as it stands in the Speech, is as follows \* :

“ *In all your deliberations you will undoubtedly bear in mind the true grounds and origin of the War.*  
 “ AN ATTACK WAS MADE ON US AND OUR ALLIES,  
 “ founded on principles which tend to destroy all  
 “ property, to subvert the laws and religion of  
 “ every civilized nation, and to introduce uni-  
 “ versally that wild and destructive system of rapine,  
 “ anarchy, and impiety, the effects of which, as they  
 “ have already been manifested in France, furnish  
 “ a dreadful but useful lesson to the present age and  
 “ to posterity.”

The real Speech, therefore, differs both in substance and in letter from the quotation. It does not say that the true grounds of the War were to

\* Vide Woodfall's Parliamentary Reports, vol. i. p. 11.

oppose that wild and destructive system, the effects of which had been manifested in France. It by no means asserts, "that the War was to be waged to subdue principles and opinions; to change the Government, and not to punish over acts of insult, or to enforce restitution\*;" but it declares *that an attack* was made upon us and our Allies, founded on principles of such pernicious tendency. His Majesty therefore calls upon his People to persevere in the War, as being necessary to defend themselves from aggressions, rendered infinitely more dangerous by the nature of the principles upon which they were committed.

If the printed debates can be relied upon, not one of the Speakers on the side of Opposition considered the Speech as declaring to the House that the grounds of the War had been merely to oppose that system of misrule which prevailed in France. Mr. Fox, who makes the charge against Ministry, does not support it by a quotation from the Royal Speech: he refers to the same passage of Lord Mornington's speech, which is cited by Mr. Erskine; and he adduces it as his authority †, in the same manner as Mr. Erskine condescends with more impropriety to quote it ‡.

\* Mr. Erskine's Pamphlet, p. 70.

† Woodfall's Parl. Reports, vol. i. p. 17.

‡ Mr. Erskine's Pamphlet, p. 70 and 71.

Having thus disclosed the fact, I shall not visit it with a single harsh epithet, nor traverse one of the consequences, which the author deduces from his own misconception. I make no doubt that this misquotation has originated from mistake, and not from any wilful design to mislead the Public. But I must stand excused for calling on that Public to remark this lamentable consequence of a zealous and indiscriminate attachment to party. If its influence can so blind an honest and able gentleman, that he will mistake the very words which lie plain in broad print before him, what credit can we give to his statement of facts which are less easy to be ascertained, and where it is of course more difficult to detect misrepresentation? How often must his conclusions prove erroneous, or extravagant, or overpushed, when the very plainest pointed proposition suffers distortion as it passes from his hands?

The substance of Mr. Erskine's charge against the Cabinet, previous to Mr. Wickham's Note, is reducible to this:—That they did not acknowledge the Government of France to be capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity with other Countries until the commencement of the Session in October 1795; 2dly, That when they did acknowledge it shortly afterwards, they did not reap the fruits of that measure by an immediate negotiation for Peace.



During the domination of the Brissotines, who were the authors of the War, and during the reign of Terror, as the French emphatically call the tyranny of Robespierre, what confidence could be rationally placed in the professions of this wild and sanguinary Government? Would the Gironde faction have observed that Peace for which they did not seek? Would they have listened to overtures to put an end to a War which they had wantonly provoked? Were we to expect concord and amity and an eternal league with the crew of Robespierre, who had sworn an everlasting hatred to Great Britain? The Jacobins did not wish for Peace with us; it was their dearest object to render War eternal. Death was decreed against any man who should treat of Peace with an Enemy who held a single foot of that territory which was assigned to France by her own constitution. England must therefore have ceded all her conquests in the East and West Indies as a propitiatory present, not that she might obtain Peace, but that she might be permitted to sue for it. What must the terms have been to correspond with this extravagant preliminary? So violent was the Jacobin animosity against this Country, that the usual horrors and cruelties of War were not sufficient to gratify it. By a Decree of the Convention, vengeance, more unrelenting, indiscriminate, and universal, was to be exercised against the British Soldiery, than the most savage Tribes  
had

had ever practised against each other. No prisoners were to be made; no quarter was to be given to wounded or unfortunate valour; but a War of utter extirpation was announced. Was this a disposition so truly promising, so meek and so pacific, that England ought to have supplicated for Peace, or could have relied on its continuance, if it had been concluded?

Laying aside for the present all consideration of those dangers which must have beset our internal tranquillity, if this measure had been adopted, could any hope exist that Peace was attainable under circumstances like these? The hatred of the Jacobins against this Country was indelible; their jealousy at its power, and their envy of its prosperity, were openly avowed. So far from its being their interest to conclude the War, Mr. Erskine himself contends that the very existence of the Republic depended upon its continuance\*.

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\* Page 49.

I am not concerned to vindicate the justice of this reasoning. I only request it may be remarked, that it is the reasoning of Opposition, and that they are confuted upon their own principles. Mr. Erskine pronounces it to be the fact, with all the decisiveness of the modern French style, that "She (France) " was rent asunder by the divisions of her own People, but " cemented again by the *conspiracy of Kings*." Might not that wonderful coincidence of opinion, which exists sympathetically between an English Opposition and a French Government, have suggested this sentiment to the latter, as well as to the former? Mr. Erskine shall take his choice of the alterna-

The feeling in which they gloried was eternal animosity to crowned heads. The principle upon which they acted towards Great Britain and her Allies was, that neither Peace nor Treaty, nor the prescribed forms and usages of Nations, should impede the aggrandisement of France, and the general plunder of Europe.

Weigh the characters of Robespierre, Danton, Barrere, d'Herbois, Couthon, or St. Juste, with whom Opposition would have had our Sovereign treat : view their conduct towards each other ; and then decide what ought to have been the conduct of Great Britain. That common appetite for prey which keeps savage wolves and bears from falling upon each other ; that general law of union which preserves some shew of justice even in the outlaw's den, and awes its desperate inhabitants from inflicting those barbarities upon each other which they associate to practise on mankind ; could not influence these monsters. Their animosities, their ambition, their savage delight in perfidy and blood, overleaped even those enormous bounds which

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tives which this dilemma presents. If the Jacobins did not originate the notion, and act upon it in the first instance, the People of England have to thank the Opposition for suggesting an argument which must be most cogent with France against the conclusion of Peace. If the Revolutionists were of opinion that War was essential to consolidate the Revolution and to preserve their Government, it is then decisive evidence that they provoked it.

wickedness

wickedness finds it necessary to impose upon itself. Murder lost its relish, unless it was seasoned with treachery. The fall of the guillotine ceased to excite rapture, unless the author of the death gave the signal for execution by a fraternal fawn on his victim.

What Peace with such men could have lasted even during a period necessary for the exchange of those counterparts in which it was contained? Concession would have increased their demands; humility would have rendered them more bloated with insolence. They proclaimed, with an exulting yell, that the National interests of France called for the destruction of this New Carthage, as they impudently termed the United Kingdoms which constitute this Empire. With such political opinions, with such rancorous and deadly animosity to this Country, and without any one principle which could bind the Rulers of France to an observance of the Treaty, what had England to expect from a Peace if concluded? Was she to put off her strength, and to dissolve her alliances, to slumber in tranquillity till this couched tiger should spring forth to destroy her?

Pleasing as the thoughts of Peace must be, does it not become a prudent Government, and a magnanimous People, to consider whether it may not be purchased at too dear a price? Does it not

behave them to estimate the sincerity, the designs, the conduct, and the character of those with whom it is to be made? They who cry out that Peace is to be preferred to every consideration, impose notions upon us which it is impossible they can believe. They wish the People of England to forget their own dignity and absolute safety. But let them beware how they are caught by the lure. Let them guard against this effeminate and womanish longing for what will rivet their chains in the soundness of their slumbers. Never let them forget the councils of that great Roman Orator, whose Country was destroyed because his advice was despised.

“ Sed hoc primum videndum est, cum omnibusne pax esse possit, an sit aliquod bellum  
 “ inextinguibile in quo pactio pacis lex sit servitutis.”

But France fought and preserved the Alliance of America, of Prussia, of Spain, and the Princes of the Empire; and the conclusion is that she would do the same to Great Britain\*.

Not one of these instances do in reality controvert the strong arguments which are derived from the avowed principles and character of her Rulers,

\* Mr. Erskine's Pamphlet, p. 83. who quotes from two Motions made by Mr. Fox and Mr. Grey.

and the instability of her Government. Admitting that France remained faithful to her engagements with these Powers to the full extent for which Opposition contend, it did not spring from any respect for her obligations to them.—It was imposed upon her by the immediate necessities of her own situation.

During the continuance of the War, it was her manifest interest to cultivate a good understanding with every one of those Powers.

It was her interest to do so with America, because, from the annihilation of the French marine, she stood in need of some carriers to convey foreign commodities to her ports. She was the more anxious to maintain it, because the harbours of the United States were absolutely necessary to enable her to preserve her own colonies, and to make any attempts upon our trade in the West Indies.

Independent of the advantage which must arise from a diminution of her enemies, while she continued to contend with the remainder, it was matter of most obvious policy to raise some Power in the German Empire which might weaken the influence of the Emperor. The Rulers of France found an instrument every way suited to their purpose in the King of Prussia. They sought and obtained his alliance, in a sympathy of disposition, principles, and views. The treaties which are thus referred to  
were

were not repugnant to the avowed objects of France—to her reducing the dominions, and humbling the power of Austria, while she annihilated the Navy, and destroyed the Commerce of Great Britain. They were made and observed (so far as they were observed) with the direct object and for the express purpose of accomplishing the ruin of these two Powers, whom the Republic properly regarded as her only rivals.

It is something worse than inconclusive argument to resort to Treaties, upon which France reits the main pillars of her aggrandisement, for proofs that she would remain faithful to her engagements with a Nation whom it was her avowed object to combat to extermination.

Let us look to her transactions with Flanders, with Holland, with Genoa, and with Tuscany, to estimate whether France is capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of peace and amity. Has she respected their rights in preference to her own interests?—Have the principles of her conduct been unexceptionably just?—Has her disposition proved uniformly forbearing and pacific towards petty States whom she might insult and trample upon with impunity? Ask the opinion of those Countries, and then let the question be decided, whether the political integrity and good faith of France is such as we ought to confide in?

Let Austrian Flanders look to the professions with which the Republic entered her territories, and compare it with the violation of her Altars, the expulsion of her Clergy, the exile of her Nobles, the confiscation of her Property, and the absolute mortgage of nearly all her Lands to the Creditors of the French Government. Let the Dutch come forward to testify the promises of France to the Republicans of Holland, and the Declaration of the National Convention when the French army passed the Rhine, and then let them say, whether they are not laid in perpetual bonds by the annexation of Maestricht and Venloo to the French Empire? Let Genoa speak of her forced Loans, her insulted Government, and her violated territory. But above all, let the Grand Duke of Tuscany enumerate the consequences and the rewards of his uniform predilection for the amity of France.—His dominions invaded, his powers of Sovereignty outraged, his subjects pillaged, and his principal port forcibly converted into a French garrison, for the purpose of annihilating the Tuscan commerce.

These are the fruits of a Republican League. Yet even with these bitter samples of perfidious violence the Grand Duke might have rested thankful, since any forbearance in a robber is accounted mercy to those whom he has reduced under his power either by circumvention or force. But the capacious measure of contumacy, perfidy, and injustice



justice which was to be poured on the head of a Prince, who deserved the protection of France, if any Prince could deserve it, was not yet full.— General Buonaparte taught him the just value of Regicide tenderness and Jacobin sincerity. He was forced to ransom Leghorn, and purchase the evacuation of his territories, from that Ally to whom he had sacrificed his family regards and his hereditary connexions. But the money had been scarcely told when the French returned to the place, and, not satisfied with re-assuming their wonted possession, compelled the inhabitants of this Neutral State to assist in the equipment of an hostile fleet\*.

Those who cite the cases of America, Prussia, and Spain, know full well that these instances afford a strong argument against the very position which they are adduced to support. They are perfectly assured that France has not been faithful in the observance of her Treaties even with these Powers, and that she has furnished strong grounds of complaint to them all. They cannot be ignorant that she rules Spain with a rod of iron; that she regards her rather as a subjected Sovereignty, existing by sufferance, than as an independent Ally. The remonstrances of the Chancery of Wetzlaer, and the

\* So far as the recent accounts from Italy are to be relied on, the treatment of the Venetian Republic is still more outrageous. But I shall not dwell upon them here, as we have not hitherto received an account whether the French Republic have approved or censured this conduct of their Generals.

Prussian

Prussian Declaration, will inform the People of England how far France respects her compact with Prussia, when it contradicts her appetite for plunder and innovation. The State Papers which passed between Citizen Adet and Mr. Pinckney will unfold the principles upon which she proceeds with respect to America \*.

If France cannot refrain from the commission of justice and perfidy even in her conduct towards those States, whose good-will she feels it to be her prime interest to conciliate, what hope can remain for Great Britain whom she regards as her rival? These facts decide the political incapacity of the French Government, although an hundred such politicians as Mr. Erskine had risen to oppose the conclusion. But he has given nothing more than a divided support; and this very measure, against which he exclaims so vehemently in one part of his book †, he has in effect admitted to be a “matter of fair political controversy” in another ‡.

Hitherto the conduct of Administration has been arraigned, because they refused, upon the motion of

\* I am aware that some of these instances of the injustice of France have occurred since the establishment of her present Constitution. But this circumstance instead of weakening adds new strength to the argument. For it will not be contended, at least as I should suppose, that France is less capable of maintaining the accustomed relations of Peace and Amity under her present Government than under the Jacobin tyranny.

† Page 79.

‡ Page 40.

Mr.

Mr. Fox, to acknowledge the capacity of the Jacobin Government to treat. They are now to be accused, because they did acknowledge the new French Government, by the Royal Message sent on the 9th of December 1795.

Whether Mr. Pitt differs from the Opposition, or coincides in opinion, it is perfectly the same. He is still subject to their censure, and is equally accused of sinister design.

The sincerity of His Majesty's Ministers in taking this step is impeached by Mr. Erskine, because the Message "only expressed His Majesty's readiness to *meet a disposition* on the part of his enemies to negotiate\*." He remarks †, "Where, or how was His Majesty in the nature of things to *meet* such pacific dispositions, however they might have been entertained on the part of France? The British Government, by the various acts of its Crown and Parliament, (enumerated in the preceding page,) had interposed a positive and public obstacle to Negotiation—it had declared the incapacity of the French Government; an obstacle the most insulting and degrading ever offered by one independent Nation to another; and notwithstanding this declaration of the new state of things in the Message, it is plain that this obstacle still continued. The

\* Page 85.

† Ibid.

“ Declaration’ was a mere *private* communication  
 “ of the King of Great Britain to *his own Parlia-*  
 “ *ment* : it contained no signification to *France* of  
 “ this change of sentiment concerning her Go-  
 “ vernment. The existence of a Government was  
 “ not even acknowledged. If indeed His Majesty  
 “ had accompanied the communication to his own  
 “ Parliament with an authoritative Declaration to  
 “ the new Government of France, acknowledging  
 “ its civil capacity as the Representative of the  
 “ French Nation, and expressing a readiness to ne-  
 “ gotiate, even in the passive language of the  
 “ Message, I should have considered such a pro-  
 “ ceeding as a fair motion towards Peace.”

This is the argument which Mr. Erskine displays  
 to public notice as the choice and prime sample  
 of his political magazine. It is the touchstone by  
 which he covets to have the value of his book as-  
 certained. To use his own words, he desires to  
 stand or fall in the whole of what he has written,  
 as it shall be answered “ by every man whose  
 “ reason is not disordered, and whose heart is not  
 “ corrupted \*.” A little less zeal might have cau-  
 tioned this learned Gentleman against the danger of  
 putting his whole argument to issue upon a single  
 point. A little more reflection might have taught  
 him the weakness of that point to which he has so  
 incautiously trusted.

If this "insulting and degrading obstacle," as it is called, was interposed by the various acts of the Crown and Parliament, was it not removed by the very same means? Every one of these acts of which the Opposition complain, in behalf of the French Republic, were either direct communications between the Crown and the Parliament, or they were the sentiments of the two Houses, declared in consequence of their deliberations, and recorded in their Journals. They were proceedings of the same nature, and of the same degree of publicity, with that Message to which the objection is made. They must therefore be considered altogether "as a mere private communication of "the King of Great Britain to his Parliament\*," or as being of a nature sufficiently public for France to notice. Let Mr. Erskine take his choice of the alternatives. If they were private communications which France ought not to have noticed at all, then she has never been insulted.—If they were sufficiently public to demand her attention, then the acknowledgment of the politic capacity of the French Government was as notorious to France as the denial, and the very same means were used to remove the obstacles to Peace which are supposed to have created them.

But Ministers were insincere† in their wishes for Peace, because they made no motion whatso-

\* Page 86.

† Page 89.

ever, either directly or indirectly, towards it, from the 9th of December 1795, when this Message was agitated, to the 8th of March 1796, when Mr. Wickham transmitted the Note to M. Barthelemi.

If the Cabinet had waited for the short space of three months, to feel how the pulse of the new Government in France beat towards Peace, it would not have been easy to arraign their conduct upon the usual notions of policy and good sense. Speaking as a private individual, I must say, that such a degree of caution and forbearance would have been more wise and ultimately more beneficial to the Country, than that precipitate eagerness to negotiate, which the Opposition advised, and which the Minister pursued. But candour obliges me to refute Mr. Erskine's position, although it would rather contribute to the Minister's justification to establish than to controvert it.

The evidence which issues from the fact itself is sufficient not only to contradict the assertion that Ministers took no step for three months subsequent to the Message, but it proves that they could not have delayed to take one even for a single week. Three weeks out of the three months would, I make no doubt, upon more mature deliberation, have been deducted by Mr. Erskine himself; for,

unless some new method of communication has been discovered, it would take so much time to transmit instructions to Mr. Wickham at Bern, and to enable him to deliver his Note to M. Barthelemi at Basle. It should seem to be likewise necessary that the result of the King's communication to his Parliament should be transmitted to the Emperor, that we might at least give our only Ally the choice whether he would negotiate with us, or continue the War alone. The result of the Imperial Councils must also have been received here, before our Cabinet could finally resolve upon their measures, and transmit their instructions to Switzerland. So that taking into our estimate the distance of London, Vienna, and Basle, the nature of the subject, which would require some little consideration, and the unavoidable impediments which couriers experience during the time of War; it cannot be fairly contended that Lord Lansdowne made greater haste to surrender America, or that the Opposition could have exerted greater speed to deliver up Belgium to the Regicide Republic, than Ministers used to expedite their Negotiation with the new French Government.

After such a censure upon the Cabinet for not having taken any steps towards Peace, the next objection is to that step which they took to procure it.

The proposition contained in Mr. Wickham's Note to M. Barthelemi is considered by Mr. Erskine \* as " the true criterion by which the wisdom " and sincerity of Ministers, on the subject of " Peace, must be estimated."

His assertions upon this subject are so unqualified as to make us pause, out of respect to his name. His words are †,—" I utterly deny that the best " step, or that any just or rational step was taken " by Ministers in Mr. Wickham's propositions " towards Peace.—And I assert, that it was impossible that France should not actually entertain " that suspicion of our sincerity which the Declaration charges to be affected."

Mr. Erskine must know, because he has sometimes felt, that opinions so bold and decisive require the support of irrefragable argument. Ill-founded confidence is the certain parent of shame and confusion to all who display it. The world will detect a swaggering assertion when it is unhappily yoked with a paltry proof, although the matter in dispute should be of the most trivial importance that has ever been discussed in Westminster-hall. The good sense of this Country requires something more to convince it than an high flight of words, which vanish from the appre-

\* Page 89.

† Page 90.



hension as soon as they are uttered. But when an Englishman undertakes to justify the acts of the French Government, in opposition to those of his own, something more seems requisite to defend this departure from the common feelings of mankind than cogent reasoning. When he has shaken off the invaluable predilection for what is called our Country, he does not merely degrade England by condemning the conduct of that Executive Power to whom she has committed the management of her intercourse with foreign Nations, but he advances France above her by a contrasted superiority. Arguments of such a tendency must burst like prophetic sounds from the unwilling lips of the agitated speaker.

We claim a right to look for this overbearing strength of demonstration where Nature does not mingle with the argument, but it springs from the rigorous justice of unconquerable conviction.—When under the hands of Mr. Erskine we have something more to hope. It is our fellow-countryman who stands against us. He will approach a subject so sacred to our feelings with trembling reluctance. He will recollect that the honour of the Country is involved in the dispute. Even the Minister shall be spared, lest England should suffer disgrace and humiliation in the eyes of Europe ! Let us see how he keeps forward to this line of conduct which true Patriotism would have marked out for him.

He

He recurs first to that argument which I have already refuted, that notwithstanding His Majesty's Message, we did not acknowledge the political capacity of the French Government to maintain the accustomed relations of Peace and Amity. But if his reasoning was inconclusive before Mr. Wickham's communication to M. Barthelemi, it is infinitely more weak after the delivery of his Note.

It requires something more than an uncommon share of gravity to state in the face of the Country, that we had not acknowledged the capacity of the French Government to conclude a Peace by this communication, when its immediate object and direct purpose was to propose a Negotiation with France, either by means of a Congress, or in any other way which she might choose to point out. If any measure, therefore, can amount to "an authoritative Declaration to the new Government of France, acknowledging its civil capacity as the Representative of the French Nation \*," for which Mr. Erskine so strenuously contends; it is this very measure which the Cabinet pursued, and against which he now inveighs. It was adopted immediately after His Majesty's communication to the two Houses of Parliament. It was a more vigorous step towards Peace than Mr. Erskine declares would have satisfied him. For it did not

\* Mr. Erskine, page 86.

merely express "a readiness to negotiate, in the " passive language of the Message \*," but it was a direct and immediate effort to give practical effect to that acknowledgment which our offer to negotiate conveyed.

But France was justified in her suspicions that we were insincere, because " England was still " endeavouring to engage the activity of her " Allies in the original cause which had conferred Europe. She continued as before, to " subsidize the Emperor, and what is more important, she continued to pay the Army of the " Prince of Condé †."

Let the Country thank the Honourable Gentleman for speaking out. If there does exist a medicine of sufficient potency to counteract the general torpor which now creeps upon the Nation; if a draught can be composed, however nauseous, which may possess efficacy to restore our ancient spirit, it is surely now discovered. Such are the arguments with which Opposition woo the Nation to their arms;—such are the principles upon which they profess to govern the Empire.

What! Is it not sufficient that we are to be advised to send an Ambassador to Paris with the

\* Mr. Erskine, page 86.

† Ibid. pages 90 and 91.

humblest apology for not having previously recognised the justice, the temperance, the wisdom, and the stable power of the Regicide?—Is it not enough that we should be counselled to allow France such an influence in our domestic affairs, that we must dismiss His Majesty's Servants for having commenced "a just and necessary War," with the concurrence of the Legislature, and the approbation of the People?—Are these public humiliations of Great Britain in the eyes of Europe, these dreadful sacrifices to the pride of Opposition and of France, inadequate pledges of our ardor for Peace?—Is all this insufficient to satisfy the ravenous unnatural appetite for British degradation?—Must France be justified in her suspicions of English sincerity, because we have not broken with our Allies, discontinued our warlike preparations, and dismissed our Auxiliaries, as a preliminary to our asking for Peace?—Is the Government to be accused because it would not place the Country, thus bound, stripped, and defenceless, at the feet "of a subtle, "insulted, and enraged Enemy\*?" Mr. Erskine will justify France in her charges of perfidy against the Country, because we did not voluntarily forego those means by which an honourable Peace can be alone procured, that we might testify our wishes to attain it. Surely no ruffian clamour from Guildhall or Palace Yard can so drown the voice of

\* Mr. Erskine, page 92.

reason that the great body of the People must not see the danger and the ignominy of such councils.

It is farther contended \*, that “ there is no man of honour in England who will lay his hand upon his heart and say, that he believes this new French Constitution, this legitimate infant of a month old, was the cause of the King’s Mesſage. Nay, further, who will not admit that the growing neceſſities of the Country, and that the feelings of the People on the ſubject of the War, did not ſolely and ſingly produce it.”

“ How then,” continues Mr. Erſkine †, “ could we be ſo weak as to expect that a moſt ſubtle, infulted, and enraged Enemy would believe what we do not believe ourſelves, and what no man of common ſenſe ever did, or to the end of the world will believe ? ”

It is rather a new way of arguing, to aſſert that the French were entitled to queſtion our ſincerity in recogniſing their Government, and in propoſing Peace, becauſe no man of common ſenſe can diſpute that theſe meaſures were required by the neceſſities of the Country and the wiſhes of the People. I have not hitherto learned that France

\* Page 91.

† Page 92:

demands,

demands, as a preliminary to Negotiation, that our Cabinet should subscribe to the spotless perfection of the new Republican Constitution. She has not yet condescended to propound those terms, upon which she will vouchsafe to give us Peace. But if this be one of them, I will not degrade even Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, or His Grace of Bedford, by the supposition that they are qualified to conclude the Treaty. If England must submit to such a condition, I rather imagine that she will have to form that Cabinet who is to conclude Peace out of those precious remains of the Revolution Society, whom their cowardice has saved from imprisonment or transportation.

But if France is to rest satisfied, as she ought to do, when our Ministers have acknowledged the capacity of her Government to treat, and with our offer to negotiate, she cannot have a more decisive proof of our sincerity, than that our advances are “produced by the growing necessities of the Country, and the feelings of the People on the subject of the War.” Were I to grant that Ministers had been insincere, yet France “should have taken them at their words.” The situation of the Country would have been a sure pledge that the Cabinet could not dare to retract those offers which it had been compelled

led to make, if France had been willing to conclude a Peace.

Ministers, according to Mr. Erskine, were insincere, inasmuch as there was but little difference between the Constitution which had been newly set up and that which had been recently pulled down in France. But this argument is one that France herself was not likely to use. She must have been sensible of the imperfections of her ancient Constitution, or she would not have changed it. She must have thoroughly approved of the new one, or she would not have adopted it. She must have seen a striking "difference between the new order of things and "the old order of things\*," for she had publicly proclaimed it. It is therefore a curious consequence to draw, that France must have concluded from the nature of the thing that our Ministry were insincere in their acknowledgment of the Republic, because they seemed to admit a difference which she herself felt, proclaimed, and acted upon. Without entering into a minute discussion of the theoretical distinctions between the old system of Government and the new, it is certain that a very striking difference did exist, which was practically manifested in the conduct of France towards other Nations, and in the general disposition of her inhabitants. It was with these effects alone that our Ministry

\* Mr. Erskine, page 92.

had any concern as acting for this Country. That such was the fact, Mr. Erskine is himself doomed to confess ; for it fortunately happens, that whenever his assertions are violent and dangerous, he bears his own antidote in some positive contradiction,

Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head.

“ Proceedings now provoke the indignation of  
“ the enlightened part of that Nation, which, not  
“ long ago, would have been a signal for enthusiastic approbation. What was formerly a savage  
“ Festival, is now scarcely endured as a political  
“ Commemoration ; and we see her public Councils, even in the first transports of their unexampled victories, hailing them as the harbingers  
“ of universal tranquillity \*.”

The arguments which Mr. Erskine has hitherto alleged in justification of the French suspicions were drawn from other sources than the actual Correspondence between Mr. Wickham and M. Barthelemi. Of the proposition itself he facetiously pronounces, that the object was to “ pump” that Minister. The poignancy of the jest must plead its excuse, for it is but ill suited to such a serious subject.

“ Mark now how plain a tale shall put him down.”

\* Mr. Erskine, p. 126.



The British Cabinet, not having any immediate means of communication with France, make overtures towards a Negotiation with her Government through the medium of an English Minister who is resident with a Neutral State. The War having extended throughout Europe, they propose a Congress, as the most easy and expeditious way of arranging those terms of Peace in which it was necessary to include the varying interests of so many Powers. But this mode of terminating the miseries of War, although the most usual, as well as the most natural, was not exclusively prescribed to France. England, while she proposed it, was cautious lest she might appear to dictate, and she referred it to the discretion of the Republic, to point out any other form which might better suit with her inclination or her interest. This would seem to be a proceeding as direct, as simple, and as moderate as could possibly be devised.

What is the answer? We are accused, in the most insolent terms, of insincerity, of ignorance of our true interests, and of harbouring a design to protract the War. Our proposition for a Congress is rejected, and no other means of entering upon the work of Peace are proposed. We are, at the same time, censured for not devising some other mode for France, which she herself is either unable to specify, or will not condescend to state; and it is finally declared, as the basis of negotiation, “ that  
“ the

“ the Constitutional Act does not permit the Executive Directory to consent to any alienation of that which, according to the existing laws, constitutes the territories of the Republic.”—“ That it cannot make or listen to any proposition which would be contrary to them.”

What then is the reasoning of Mr. Erskine and the Opposition? England, mild in her language and in her manner, proposes a mode through which Peace is attainable, and she offers to listen to any other which the Executive Directory may suggest. Yet England is to be accounted insincere in her offers for Peace! France is insulting in her language, and extravagant in her declarations. She rejects every thing, and she proposes nothing. Yet the Republic is to be praised as eager for that Peace which Great Britain has offered, and which France has refused!

But the English Cabinet was not in earnest\*, because Mr. Wickham states to M. Barthelemi, in his Note, “ that he was not in any manner authorised to enter with him into any Negotiation upon the subject of his Note.” If this be a proof of the Minister’s insincerity, it is rather singular that he should give it an unnecessary place in this Note, when, according to Mr. Erskine, he was

\* Mr. Erskine, p. 92.

“ seeking for some public justification for continuing the War.” There was no occasion for the insertion, unless it was intended, as it really was, to guard against the possibility of misconception.

Ministers had proposed a Negotiation by means of a Congress of Ambassadors from the various Belligerent Powers. As this was the usual method in which Peace had been concluded in Europe when War had raged thus widely, it was natural to believe that it would have been adopted by France, if she had been really solicitous for the restoration of general tranquillity. If she had approved of a Congress, any powers granted to Mr. Wickham to negotiate with M. Barthelemi would have been wholly useless. If she had disapproved, it was left to her to declare the mode in which she might choose to treat. Ought we, therefore, to have gravely appointed a Plenipotentiary to negotiate in Switzerland, when France might elect to negotiate at Paris or at Vienna ; or might choose, according to her late proposal, to proceed by couriers, or might refuse to treat altogether ?

The true way of estimating the frivolity of the objection is, by considering what the consequences would have been, if France had rejected the proposal of a Congress, but had offered to negotiate

through the medium of an Ambassador. The Executive Government of this Country must have dispatched a Minister Plenipotentiary immediately to Paris upon receiving this proposal. A refusal would have put us as completely in the wrong as we are now in the right. Is it not manifest, therefore, that our having neglected to confer these Powers upon Mr. Wickham could have left us no postern to escape from treating; that our granting them could have answered no useful purpose in furthering a Peace? Yet such is the step upon which the Opposition have been enabled to raise the most violent clamour against the sincerity of Administration.

The last argument from which Mr. Erskine labours to demonstrate the same proposition is, that the answer communicated from the Executive Directory by M. Barthelemi “set up the French Constitution as an absolute bar to the cession of any part of the territory of the Republic; that this pretension being unjustifiable, and the reason of it frivolous and unworthy of a great and enlightened Nation, in its communication with another\*.”—“We should have kept the Negotiation open†,” and not have seized upon such an extravagant refusal as “a new spur to the

\* Mr. Erskine, p. 93.

† Ibid.

\* vigorous

“ vigorous prosecution of the War \*;” and this, forsooth, because it would have been easy to have refuted such ill-founded pretensions. So that the more unreasonable the demands of our Enemy, the greater is the chance of concluding a Peace; and every cuff and kick which she is pleased to bestow upon us, the more sedulous should be our endeavour to cultivate her friendship! I should think that it would be very unsafe to practise upon Mr. Erskine, as an individual, that conduct which he prescribes to his Country. The extravagance and absurdity of an Enemy’s demands have been uniformly considered as decisive of her resolution to refuse a Peace.—But it is idle to answer the vain speculation.

The attempt has been made to argue France out of her extravagance by the Embassy of Lord Malmesbury. She prevented all tedious discussion, by a speedy dismissal of our Ambassador; but the extravagance of her terms were increased by the attempt. In her answer to Mr. Wickham, she declared that she would listen to no proposals which were contrary *to the laws* which bound France. In her last reply to Lord Malmesbury, she declared that she would “ listen to no proposals contrary to *the Constitution, to the Laws, and to the Treaties which bind the Republic* †.”

\* Mr. Erskine, p. 94.

† Official Papers respecting Lord Malmesbury’s Negotiation, p. 65.

Let me, however, pursue the painful narrative of British humiliation through all its stages.

Undismayed by such recent ill success, the Ministry resolved to make a new effort to negotiate a Peace with France, in the ensuing September. As the Executive Directory had disapproved of a Congress, they determined to send an Ambassador to Paris, who should discuss the terms of Peace. For this purpose a *written Note* demanding, in the name of his Britannic Majesty, a passport for a person of confidence, was transmitted to the Executive Directory, through the medium of the Danish Chargé D'Affaires resident in Paris. After waiting three days for an answer to this Communication, M. Koenemann addressed himself to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, that he might learn the result of his application. This Minister told him, "*in a very dry tone,*" that he was *not permitted to return an answer in writing*, but that he was directed to inform him, by word of mouth, that the Executive Government would neither receive nor answer any confidential overtures transmitted through an intermediate channel from the Enemies of the Republic; but that if they would send persons furnished with full powers, they might, upon the frontiers, demand the passports necessary for proceeding to Paris. This answer was perfectly general; and the Directory would not so much as condescend to notice the application

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which had been made by the King of Great Britain in the behalf of his people. Whatever it may please the Opposition to assert, there is at least one disinterested testimony to the insolence of the French Government at this juncture, and to its marked disinclination for Peace. It is that of the Danish Resident, through whose hands these Communications passed. M. Koenemann's letter to the Danish Ambassador contains the following reflection: " I wish, for the sake of humanity, that we  
 " may meet with better success at some future  
 " period; but *I fear that this period is still at a*  
 " *great distance.*"

But the ardor of the British Cabinet to promote a general Peace, was not to be extinguished by a repulse so supercilious, so forbidding, and so cold. It was resolved to comply even with those unnecessary punctilios, which France could only have prescribed with a hope to stifle the Negotiation in its birth. Lord Malmesbury demanded a passport upon the French frontier, and was permitted to proceed to Paris. Immediately after his arrival, he presented a short Memorial upon the subject of his Embassy, which did not contain the slightest reflection upon the conduct of France. It was confined solely to a proposal that the principle of mutual cession and restitution should form the basis of Peace. It declares that Great Britain has no restitution to demand, but that she has taken  
 from

from France Colonies and Establishments of incalculable value. His Britannic Majesty therefore  
 “ proposes to negotiate, by offering to make  
 “ Compensation to France, by proportionable  
 “ restitutions for those arrangements to which she  
 “ will be called upon to consent, in order to  
 “ satisfy the just demands of the King’s Allies, and  
 “ to preserve the Political Balance of Europe \*.”

To this plain, moderate, and, on our part, disinterested proposal, an answer is returned the most offensive and unreasonable that has perhaps ever appeared in diplomatic history.

It affects to lament that the proposal offers nothing but *dilatory means* to bring the Negotiation to a conclusion. It condemns the conduct of his Britannic Majesty for endeavouring to include his Allies in the Negotiation. It stupidly, as well as falsely, asserts, that the Ambassador’s Credentials formally authorised the conclusion of a separate Peace. It insinuates that the Ambassador “ had  
 “ received secret instructions, which would destroy  
 “ the effect of his ostensible Powers;” and “ that  
 “ the British Government have had a double  
 “ object in view—to prevent, by a general Proposition, the partial Proposition of other Powers;  
 “ and to obtain from the people of England the

\* Official Papers respecting the Negotiation, p. 23.



“ means of continuing the War, by throwing  
 “ upon the Republic the odium of a delay oc-  
 “ casioned by themselves.” It seems rather to  
 reject than admit the principle of Cession and  
 Restitution, which was proposed as the basis of  
 Negotiation\*. It concludes with declaring that  
 when Lord Malmesbury shall submit any specific  
 Propositions, they will hasten to give an answer to  
 them.

In Lord Malmesbury’s reply, dated 12th No-  
 vember, he complains of the injurious and offensive  
 insinuations which have been cast upon his Bri-  
 tannic Majesty by this Paper, as tending to throw  
 new obstacles in the way of accommodation. He  
 calmly answers every objection that has been made  
 by the French Government; and with respect to

\* I subjoin the Directory’s own words, that the Reader may  
 determine for himself :

“ The Executive Directory farther observe with regard to  
 “ the principle of retrocessions advanced by Lord Malmesbury,  
 “ that such a principle, presented in a vague and isolated  
 “ manner, cannot serve as the basis of Negotiation; that the  
 “ first points of consideration are, the common necessity of a  
 “ just and solid Peace, the political equilibrium which absolute  
 “ retrocessions might destroy, and then the means which the  
 “ Belligerent Powers may possess;—the one, to retain con-  
 “ quests made at a time when it was supported by a great  
 “ number of Allies now detached from the Coalition; and the  
 “ other, to recover them, at a time when those who were first  
 “ its Enemies, have, almost all, become either its Allies, or at  
 “ least neuter.”——Official Papers, p. 27.

the principle of the Negotiation, he declares, that  
 “ the Executive Directory has not explained itself  
 “ in a precise manner, either as to the acceptance  
 “ of this principle, or as to the changes or modi-  
 “ fications which it may desire to be made in it ;  
 “ nor has it, in short, proposed any other prin-  
 “ ciple whatever to answer the same end \*.” In  
 consequence of this uncertainty, he “ demands a  
 “ frank and precise explanation upon that head.”

No such explanation is given, although it was  
 often required, and several letters were inter-  
 changed between the Negotiators †.

At last, however, in consequence of a new re-  
 quest from the Court of London ‡, and the uni-  
 versal murmurs of all France at their conduct, the  
 Executive Directory declare, by a Note, dated  
 the 27th of November, that their former answer  
 contained an acknowledgment of the principle of  
 Compensation, and that they “ now make a for-  
 “ mal and positive declaration of such acknow-  
 “ ledgment.” Need any man advance further in the  
 discussion, to be convinced how much the Govern-  
 ment of France despise our applications when we

\* Official Papers respecting the Negotiation, p. 31.

† Vide No's 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23 of the Papers  
 relative to the Negotiation.

‡ Vide No. 24 of these Papers, p. 41.

due for Peace ? They resolved to adopt the basis of Negotiation which we had proposed, and yet they refused to satisfy our doubts, or to return an express answer to our solicitation. They insolently reproach us with a design to retard the conclusion of Peace, and yet they consume something more than a fortnight before they will do away an impediment which existed in misconception, and which a single moment might have removed.

Mr. Erskine, however, steps in to the assistance of the Directory. He calls it \* “ a dispute about “ nothing ;” and asserts, that “ the Executive “ Directory never meant, nor, in common sense, “ could mean, that mutual Compensation (*the basis “ of every possible Peace*) should not be the basis of “ the proposed one.”

As he cannot rescue the Executive Directory from the imputation of captiousness, he is resolved that we shall share it with them, by affirming, that this Country might have proceeded to essentials without the explanation we required. The assertion, however, betrays a want of knowledge in the very rudiments of the Law of Nations, which was not to be expected from a Gentleman of talents, who undertook to discuss the terms of Peace. It is a gross mistake to say, that mutual Compensation is

the basis of every possible Treaty. There is a totally different principle, which is mentioned by every Writer on the Law of Nations ; it is called the principle of *Uti possidetis*, and takes place where the Contracting Powers agree to continue in that state in which the 'fortune of War has left them, without Cession or Restitution on either side.

Mr. Erskine should have recollected that the principle proposed by Lord Malmesbury, admitted of modification as well as change ; and that the French might set up a new and unheard-of principle as the basis of Peace. This supposition, which might have been made, was certainly verified by the fact. The Directory have now proposed to us the observance of their Constitution, their Laws, and their Treaties, as the only basis upon which they will negotiate a Peace \*.

If other principles, therefore, did exist, upon which the French might choose to negotiate, we were entitled to receive their explicit assent or rejection of that upon which we proposed to found the terms of Peace, before we proceeded to unfold the conditions themselves. We were bound to insist upon it the more, because, from the temper and tone of the Directory's communication,

\* Lord Malmesbury's Negotiation, p. 63.

we had reason to believe that every dubious expression was to be interpreted against reconciliation; and that when we had specified our plan, we should be turned round and embarrassed by the rejection of our principle\*. Upon the dogged silence of the Directory I need make no further comment. It is sufficient to observe, that neither Mr. Erskine nor the Opposition endeavour to defend it,

This difficulty being at length surmounted, the Ambassador lost no time in delivering two confidential Memorials to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs. The one related to the terms of Peace between Great Britain and her Allies with France, and the other related to Peace between Great Britain, Spain, and Holland, who were the Allies of the Republic.

As the Negotiation is said to have turned upon a single article specified in the first mentioned Me-

\* I shall prove that this did happen in fact, notwithstanding the acknowledgment of the principle of Restitution. It is remarkable, however, that in the Directory's acknowledgment of the principle, they change Lord Malmesbury's terms of "Cession and Restitution," into "Compensation." M. De La Croix assigns the reason, in the Conference between him and Lord Malmesbury. They were determined to keep all that they had got; but were willing to recompence the Emperor by assisting him to plunder any one else to an equal amount.

morial,

morial, it will be necessary to allude only to it. His Britannic Majesty demands by it “ the restitution to His Majesty the Emperor and King of all his Dominions on the footing of the *status ante bellum* \*.” He offers as an equivalent an unreserved restitution of all the conquests made from France, in the East and West Indies.

The manner in which it was intended to fill up and modify this general outline is detailed by Lord Malmesbury in his Letter † to Lord Grenville, which contains an account of his conference with M. Delacroix. I shall make only two remarks upon this Letter, in addition to the very high and judicious encomiums which are bestowed upon it by Mr. Erskine, as well as upon its noble Author. The first is, that Lord Malmesbury expressly declares ‡, that he “ had it in command to speak and “ act with freedom and truth,” which is a direct answer by the Ambassador to the charge of insincerity which Opposition make against the Cabinet. — The second is, “ that knowing the opinion of “ the Directory, he saw but little prospect of the “ Negotiation terminating successfully §.” The People of England therefore have the judgment of an able man, whose character is unimpeached, and whose opportunity and means for forming his opi-

\* Papers relative to the Negotiation, page 45.

† Page 52.

‡ Ibid.

§ Page 61.

sion were most advantageous, that the Governors of France were wholly averse to a Peace with Great Britain.

In the conference, the restitution of Belgium was made one of the chief topics of discussion. The British Ambassador hinted that France might be permitted to retain a considerable portion of those territories which she had conquered on the left Bank of the Rhine, but declared that the French Minister "must entertain no expectation that His Majesty will relax, or ever consent to see the Netherlands remain a part of France\*."

To this it was replied by M. Delacroix, that the success of the Negotiation was to be despaired of, unless France was suffered to keep Belgium and all the territory to the Rhine. But he offered as an equivalent to the Emperor, countries in Germany and Italy of which France was not even in possession; and he proposed for this purpose, without a blush or scruple, to plunder Princes and annihilate Sovereignities with whom the Emperor was in actual Alliance. The object of this conference was to facilitate the progress of the Negotiation. It was meant to enable the French Government to frame their demands with as close

\* Page 57.

a reference to the views of Great Britain and her Allies as the situation and objects of that Country could possibly admit. According to the established forms of Negotiation, from which it is never safe to depart, because they are the only common rule which can govern the proceedings of independant States, the Executive Directory should have communicated their pretensions to Lord Malmesbury, and the several articles of each ought to have become the object of mutual discussion, and (if possible) of reciprocal compromise.

But the Directory could not venture to disclose their extravagant pretensions to England, to Europe, or even to the inhabitants of France, who were at that time clamorous for Peace. To cut the matter short at once, a Note is sent by M. Delacroix, which stated that "the Executive Directory" had heard the reading of the official Note signed "by Lord Malmesbury, and of two confidential Memorials without signatures, which were annexed to it." It refused to listen to the confidential Notes, (*i. e.* Memorials,) because they were without a signature, and required the British Ambassador, in the following terms, "to give in officially within four-and-twenty hours your Ultimatum, signed by you\*."



To remove every ground of captious objection, Lord Malmesbury acquiesces in departing from established diplomatic forms, and again transmits the Memorials, signed with his own hand. He refuses the positive demand of an Ultimatum, as shutting the door against all Negotiation; but he offers "to enter into the discussion of the proposals of his Court, or of ANY counter project which may be delivered to him on the part of the Executive Directory\*."

M. Delacroix, in his reply, takes no notice whatever of the two Memorials. But in answer to the Notes of the 17th and 19th of December, which profess the Ambassador's readiness to negotiate, he declares, that "*the Executive Directory will listen to no proposals contrary to the Constitution, to the Laws, and to the Treaties which bind the Republic.*" They command Lord Malmesbury to depart from Paris within eight-and-forty hours. M. Delacroix declares, "in the name of the Executive Directory, that if the British Cabinet is desirous of Peace, the Executive Directory is ready to follow the Negotiations ACCORDING TO THE BASIS LAID DOWN IN THE PRESENT NOTE, by the reciprocal channel of Couriers."

Grief and indignation swell within my heart when I view the dreadful consequences which impend over the mighty Empires of Great Britain and France from the frantic conduct of these upstart Sovereigns. But it rises much higher when I consider, at the time when no other part is left to this Country but to persevere in the perilous contest, that efforts are made to deceive the People ;—that the grounds upon which the War is continued are misrepresented, and we are deluded with false notions of the possibility of Peace.

According to Mr. Erskine, the object of the Embassy was not to produce a Peace, but to amuse the Country with vain and idle hopes of it, that the terms of the Loan might be more advantageous. This position is not Mr. Erskine's own; it is borrowed from the deliberations of the Executive Directory. But what the French Government ventured merely to insinuate \*, the Author considers as so self-evident that it would be "an affront to the public to maintain it by argument †." Still, however, he attempts to prove it, and asserts to this end that Lord Malmesbury was instructed to protract the Negotiation by dilatory form, until

\* Papers relative to the Negotiation, page 27.

† Mr. Erskine, page 96.

the bargain was concluded for the Loan\*. He states likewise, that if it had been otherwise, the Cabinet would have directed the Negotiation to have been resumed at the point where it dropped in the preceding March; that they would have begun with a refutation of the principles upon which the Directory had refused to disannex Belgium from her territory; when, if “France still persisted in the *“ unjust and unfounded pretension, the business “ could not have lasted a day †.”*

Assuming for a moment that the transaction between Mr. Wickham and M. Barthelemi is stated accurately, let us see whether such conduct would have been consistent with an earnest and sincere desire for Peace.

If we were to conciliate France, would it have been proper to remind her of the extravagance of

\* Mr. Erskine, from page 96 to 100.

Mr. Erskine adds another reason for the procrastination.—It is, because “the unexampled spirit and gallantry of the Archduke Charles changed the face of things, and the season became favourable for Negotiation to lie on its oars.”—Might we not venture to own “the soft impeachment?”—Is there a wise Englishman who could blame a measure which did not preclude Negotiation, but which protracted it until the rising successes of this Country and her Allies rendered the conditions of Peace more favourable to us?

† Mr. Erskine, page 97.

her former pretensions, and the insolence of her former deportment?—If we were in earnest in our wishes for Peace, should we have brought forward in the very front of the Negotiation the main obstacle to its conclusion, before either party had been softened or subdued by concession or argument?—If we were to refute the errors of the Republic, was it not right to obtain from her the admission of some principle upon which the discussion was to proceed?

When Mr. Erskine has decided these questions, it may perhaps be worth his while to examine what resemblance the transaction between Mr. Wickham and M. Barthelemi had to a Negotiation. Mr. Wickham declared that he had no powers to negotiate, and M. Barthelemi, by command from the Executive Directory, rejected the means by which we proposed to effect a Peace. Would Ministers have stood justified to the Country if they had considered a studied insult to Great Britain as a fit basis for a Treaty, or if they had voluntarily sought the discussion of a principle which France might through obstinacy continue to defend, if once brought forward, but which, if kept from her notice, she might drop, as being too absurd for discussion?

But procrastination was the object, because if it had not, the *sine qua non* of the embassy would have been proposed immediately after France had acknowledged

knowledgeed the principle of compensation. Yet so far were Ministers from doing thus, that “this *single term* was not entrusted to Lord Malmesbury\*.” He had no answer to give upon the subject to the Note of the Executive Directory, but desired to consult his Court.

This is called † “a strange departure from the ordinary and natural course of Negotiation in the hands of a high and accomplished Ambassador.” If Mr. Erskine means to assert by this remark, that Lord Malmesbury was ignorant of the general conditions upon which our Cabinet designed to conclude Peace, he is utterly unacquainted with the fact. The Ambassador was informed of all that Ministry thought and felt upon the subject. But if he means to say, in conformity to the wishes and declarations of the Executive Directory, and to the cant of Opposition newspapers, that our Ambassador ought to have concluded a Treaty without receiving instructions from his Court, it is he who would have his Country to depart “from the ordinary and accustomed course of Negotiation,” and who would put her into a situation equally unusual and disadvantageous. I certainly hold the Diplomatic Capacity of Lord Malmesbury in very high estimation. There is no man who understands the particular interests of

• Mr. Erskine, page 99.

† Ibid.

this Country and the general interests of Europe more accurately than he does. I appeal to that Nobleman, whether he would accept the responsibility which his friend would confer upon him?—Whether the final conditions of Peace must not be settled by that Cabinet of Ministers to whom the Crown resorts for advice? These conditions will necessarily vary from the temper, from the demands, and often from the very language of the Enemy. It is impossible, therefore, to declare with precision, at the outset, to an Ambassador, terms, which must depend upon the complexion of the Enemy's overtures. The Ambassador must either have recourse to his own Court for advice, as particular circumstances require, or every thing must be submitted to his individual discretion. It needs little argument to decide that the former method is most advantageous;—for, let the Plenipotentiary be ever so wise and well-informed, the wisdom and information of the Cabinet will by these means be superadded to his. If no Ambassador is to be allowed to communicate by couriers with his Court, every Nation must suffer disadvantage who concludes a Treaty within the territories of its Enemy. There can be no better proof of the position than the instance which has produced the reflection. The Minister Plenipotentiary of France had particular recourse to the Executive Power of the Republic upon every occasion; but Mr. Erskine wishes to deny to the Minister

Plenipotentiary of England a similar privilege,—and why? Because the Negotiation was protracted TEN days, while a Messenger might return from London to Paris.

After these objections urged against the design with which the Negotiation was commenced, and the form in which it was pursued, Mr. Erskine proceeds to attack the main points upon which he conceives it to have broken off.

The conclusion of his remarks is\*, “The War  
“ is therefore continued at this moment in conse-  
“ quence of the *sine qua non* of Great Britain, which  
“ is Belgium, and not at all upon the reason given  
“ why that *sine qua non* is resisted.”

“The British Nation is therefore at this mo-  
“ ment at War for Belgium†.”

The pointed manner in which these sentences are printed, and the anxiety with which the proposition is repeated, shew that the Author has affixed to it the utmost importance. No doubt he has maturely considered the argument upon which he founds his opinion. He is fully aware of the dangerous consequences of spreading false and ill-founded notions upon such a subject, under the

\* Page 107.

† Ibid.

authority of his name. Although he should stand acquitted, as I acquit him, of all wilful design to injure the Country, yet he must feel all that dreadful responsibility which attaches upon a man who renders us a divided People in the most awful and perilous hour of our danger. If Belgium is not the cause for which War is continued; if there are other demands made by France, to which this Country never can submit without utter ruin; if the avowed intention of that proud Republic is to reduce our importance, to destroy our commerce, to seize upon our Colonies, to annihilate our Navy, to crumble our Constitution with the dust, and to lay waste the fair face of this happy and once high spirited Country; what must his sensations be when he reflects that he has contributed, although it was unwittingly that he contributed, to advance the design?

The point upon which Mr. Erskine relies, is that it appears upon the face of these official Papers, that this Country is at War for Belgium.

To establish this position, he asserts,—1st, That although the restitution of the Netherlands was not made a *sine qua non* of Peace in the Memorial, yet it was expressed as a positive Ultimatum in the collateral discussions with M. Delacroix; and that having been thus proposed as an Ultimatum, it was rejected by France. I should scorn to deny that the



Ministry considered the separation of Belgium from France as a point of the utmost importance. I trust I shall prove that it is so intimately connected with the prosperity and safety of this Country, that we ought to risk every thing to prevent it from continuing a part of the Republic. But the question is, whether, as the Negotiation stood, it was an *Ultimatum* proposed and insisted upon by this Country ; or whether France has not insisted upon terms so unreasonable as to leave us no choice but to continue the War, even though we had agreed to concede this point ?

Mr. Erskine confounds the meaning of the terms *sine qua non* and *Ultimatum*, which denote in diplomatic language things totally separate and distinct. A *sine qua non* is a condition put absolutely *in the course* of a Negotiation, upon which all other conditions and concessions are dependent. It relates only to a *single* point of the pretensions of the parties while they are under discussion. Though it is insisted upon thus positively, and can never be separated from the other terms which are offered, it may admit of relaxation, of commutation, and even of absolute surrender, by means of a counter-project. But an *Ultimatum* is the *last step* of the Negotiation. It includes the *final* determination of the party upon the *whole* conditions of Peace. It is formed after all the pretensions of the several Powers have been reciprocally communicated and discussed;

discussed ; and if it be not acceded to, the Negotiation is broken off, and hostilities must be renewed. I will admit, that a condition so strongly urged as the restitution of the Netherlands was by Lord Malmesbury, would, in all probability, have been included in an Ultimatum.—But I assert, that our Ambassador was not so absurd as to place the very last act of Negotiation foremost ;—that neither he nor the Executive Directory considered an explanatory conference between the two Plenipotentiaries as containing an Ultimatum. It was left open to the French Government to propose, and the Ambassador offered to discuss any counter project which they might choose to deliver. In that counter-project France might have made the consolidation of the Netherlands with her Empire a leading article. But she neither did nor wished to consider the restitution of Belgium distinct from the remainder of our proposals for Peace. She demanded our Ultimatum upon all the terms which are specified in our Memorials. She refused to deliver in any counter-terms of her own, and, departing from that principle of restitution which she had affected to admit as a preliminary, she declared for a new basis of Negotiation, to which this Country could never accede.

• Let us examine, however, the solidity of the arguments upon which Mr. Erskine rests this opinion.

opinion. He says \*, that the Executive Directory having learned the substance of Lord Malmesbury's conference with M. Delacroix, considered the retrocession of Belgium to be insisted upon as an Ultimatum by him. When they required the Ambassador, therefore, to give in his Ultimatum in writing in twenty-four hours, " it had undoubtedly a pointed reference to Belgium, and cannot be considered as a requisition of an Ultimatum upon every collateral point of the Negotiation."

If the Directory had understood the conference as offering to convey an Ultimatum on the part of England, they would have forced a meaning from Lord Malmesbury's expressions which they were never intended to convey, because I have already shewn that a *sine qua non*, in the language of diplomacy, never can signify an *Ultimatum*. They would have acted also in contradiction to every principle of Negotiation; for, instead of considering the conditions proposed by His Britannic Majesty all together, and weighing and balancing them against each other, they would have forcibly separated that which respected Belgium from the remainder, and demanded an Ultimatum as to it, without even discussing the other points which are

\* Page 102.

mentioned in the Memorials. But it is most evident from the Note itself, that the Directory could intend no such thing. If Mr. Erskine's interpretation be just, the Directory did not mean to require an Ultimatum, for they had already received one; but they desired that the Ultimatum which had been delivered at the conference should be formally reduced into writing. If their meaning was such, it is a little singular that they should make the request only by that inference which results from desiring the Ambassador to sign it\*. It is more wonderful that they should do so at a time when they were so minutely particular in their requisition that he should sign all his communications. But what is most decisive is, that this Ultimatum, if given in at all, was propounded in the conference with M. Delacroix.—Yet the Note in which the demand is made, mentions nothing of the conference at all, but professes to be written after having heard the reading of Lord Malmesbury's Note, and the two confidential Memorials†, which contained the entire propositions of Peace

\* The words used by M. Delacroix are,—“ I am charged expressly by the Directory to declare to you, that it cannot listen to any confidential Note without a signature, and to require of you to give in to me, officially, within four-and-twenty hours, your *Ultimatum*, signed by you.”—Official Papers, page 63.

† The words are,—“ The Executive Directory has heard the reading of the official Note, signed by you, and of two

Peace between England and France, and their respective Allies. It declares, that the Directory would pay no attention to either, because they were not signed, and requires our Minister to give in the Ultimatum upon which this Country will conclude Peace, as the very first step of the Negotiation. To adopt Mr. Erskine's construction, therefore, we must not only admit that the Directory have made no reference to the principal transaction upon which the subject of their Note is founded; but that they mean to exclude its application to the very papers upon which they declare that they have made the demand. We must likewise suppose them to signify this meaning by the demand of an Ultimatum, when that word, in its usual sense, applies to all the articles that are proposed as the conditions of Peace.

Mr. Erskine is not contented with arguing that the Executive Directory considered this demand of an Ultimatum as referring only to Belgium. He makes Lord Malmesbury himself of a similar opinion.—“ For his Lordship, referring to his official Note, and also to his verbal declarations to M. Delacroix, *connecting them properly together,* expresses himself thus: *He therefore can add*

“ confidential Memorials without signatures, which were annexed to it, and which you gave in to me yesterday.”—  
Official Papers, page 63.

“ *nothing*

*“ nothing to the assurances which he has already  
 “ given to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, as well  
 “ by word of mouth as in his official Note\*.”*

This suggestion is wholly irreconcilable with every part of the Ambassador's Note. Instead of supposing that he has already given in an Ultimatum, he expressly declines to do so. He assigns reasons to justify the refusal, which are alone reconcilable with this supposition. He makes no distinction between the article which relates to Belgium and that which relates to Holland, or any other of the Allies. He requires in general to hear the pretensions of France, and declares, that to demand an Ultimatum before the *articles* of the future Treaty have been discussed, is to shut the door against all Negotiation †. These arguments would be totally inapplicable if Lord Malmesbury conceived that he had already delivered his Ultimatum, and was only required formally to reduce it into writing. He could not with propriety require that the pretensions of France should be communicated to him, that he might be enabled to frame an Ultimatum, when he had already delivered one. It would have been indecent to demand the discussion of a point upon which he had informed the Directory that no alteration would be allowed ; and

\* Mr. Erskine, page 102.

† Official Papers, page 65.

he had no right to complain that the door was shut against Negotiation, when he had closed it with his own hands\*. Neither will the half sentence which is quoted by Mr. Erskine, if it is to be regarded as common English; bear the meaning which he gives it.—The word “assurances” signifies promises, and not the terms of a treaty. When it is coupled with the remainder of the sentence, from which it was never intended to be disjoined, it has that signification. His Lordship, instead of saying with Mr. Erskine, that he has no other terms to propose than such as he had submitted to the French Minister, partly in writing and partly by word of mouth, simply declares that he can add nothing to those promises which he has already made to him; and therefore repeats them, by stating that he is ready to enter into every necessary explanation, with candour and a spirit of conciliation.

\* Mr. Erskine insists that the offer to discuss a counter project did not keep the Negotiation open, because it was coupled with a condition “that it must still be kept in view that the Netherlands must not become French, nor likely again to fall into the hands of France.” P. 101. But by an unfortunate mistake, he has quoted from the conference with M. Delacroix, instead of quoting from Lord Malmesbury’s last Note, which makes the offer in the most unqualified manner. I make no doubt that this has originated from mistake; but I must again caution the world against the pernicious influence of party zeal, which can mislead so grossly a man of talents, who is accustomed, by the course of his life, to the most patient and accurate investigation.

If

If this reasoning be well founded, it cannot be true that the Executive Directory, in their reply to this last Note, meant only to advance an Ultimatum against an Ultimatum upon a particular point. It is indeed impossible not to consider it as an answer to the whole of our propositions for Peace. They use the word *proposals*, which must apply to more than the *single* article respecting *Belgium*. It was not pretended that the restitution of these provinces would have violated either the Laws or the Treaties which bind the Republic, or any thing but the Constitution. It could have served no purpose, therefore, except that of vexatiousness, to have inserted them, if it was meant to confine the restriction to the Netherlands alone. But what puts this matter beyond question is, that the Executive Directory declare, that this Note is intended to be an answer to Lord Malmesbury's two Notes of the 17th and 19th of December. The first accompanied the delivery of the two Memorials in which our overtures for Peace were contained, and the second declared the reasons why our Plenipotentiary could not give in an Ultimatum upon them all. Both expressed his willingness to discuss all the proposals of his own Court without distinction, or to listen to any counter project on the behalf of France, for the conclusion of a general Peace.

If the Proposals of the Directory will not admit of this exposition, for which Mr. Erskine and the  
Opposition



Opposition contend, they are abandoned by both, as being too outrageous and extravagant to admit of excuse. Surely the Country will not give credit to an interpretation which is directly contrary to the meaning of the words made use of, and which is inconsistent with the language of the Papers, the nature and tendency of the transaction, and the express declarations of the parties concerned.

Yet it is upon these grounds that Opposition proclaim, in both Houses of the Legislature, that the Nation is at war for Belgium alone. It is upon such reasoning that Mr. Erskine retails it to gentlemen, in octavo; and to the vulgar, in humble duodecimo. Supported by these arguments, a Gentleman of Mr. Fox's talents, and a person of the Duke of Bedford's consequence, harangue the mobs of Westminster; and solemnly affirm, that Peace is within our reach, and that the Country is undone unless it is attained \*.

But

\* As to the Orators of Guildhall, I count not of them. It is not such a thing as Mr. Waddington that can provoke animadversion.

“ I'd hang a calf's skin on his recreant limbs.”

Superior turbulence will sometimes rise into that notice, which shall demand a lashing. But I cannot be expected to characterise Alehouse Politicians, who are scarcely known in the street which they inhabit. I need not warn the people of this Country from supposing that the clamour of Guildhall speaks the sense of the City of London. It might as well be supposed, that a mob in  
Palace

But tearing off that flimsy veil of sacrifice which hides from this people, that we are offered up as victims to destruction for the aggrandisement of France, let us examine the true state of the fact. Our Ambassador presents conditions upon which the Country is willing to conclude a Peace. He offers either to discuss them, or any other terms, which France may choose to propose. The Directory will do neither. They declare, that they have read our Memorials, but refuse to receive them, from a false and frivolous objection to their deficiency in form. They do not require other Memorials ; but, with blundering, ignorant insolence, they demand an Ultimatum within four-and-twenty hours. The Ambassador declines compliance with a demand which was in its nature absurd and impossible ; but he signs the Memorials,

Palace Yard, who shouted applause at what they could not hear, and assented to what they could not understand, evinced the sentiments of the inhabitants of Westminster. A Petition containing the grave and weighty resolutions of the first commercial city in the world, would have been moved and seconded by Merchants worthy to take the lead on such a solemn occasion ; by men whose names are heard with veneration upon the remotest shores to which Commerce has taught the value of exchanging the diversified productions of Nature. Men of large property, of extensive knowledge, of great commercial influence, would have crowded the Common Hall, to testify the opinions of the City.—It is not draymen, porters, and handicraftsmen, who are qualified to speak the sentiments of the City of London upon the question of War or Peace.

and

and renews his offer of candid and conciliatory discussion. It is replied, that the Directory “ will “ listen to no proposals contrary to the Constitution, to the Laws, and to the Treaties which “ bind the Republic.” They therefore put a direct negative on our Proposals of Peace, and they refuse to deliver in any of their own. Looking only to their design of prolonging the War, by captiousness, aggression, and insult, they dismiss our Ambassador with ignominy; and they overtop that insolence, in which they reproach our anxiety for Peace, by changing the mode of Negotiation which they had pointed out themselves, and retracting that basis which they had professed to adopt. The form was to be changed from the medium of an Ambassador, to the intervention of Couriers. The principle was no longer to be that of Restitution, for Great Britain was to have nothing; and the Emperor was to have nothing; it was an observance of the Constitution, the Laws, and the Treaties of France, upon which we were to agree to form our propositions for Peace.

The reason, therefore, upon which the War is continued, is not because the Restitution of Belgium is refused by France, but because the Republic absolutely refuses to treat with us at all, except upon a basis so unjust and extravagant, that the Opposition of England will not venture to defend

defend it\*.—They are aware of the consequences which a knowledge of the true state of the Negotiation would have on the public spirit. They labour, therefore, to distort and pervert its obvious sense, that they may seize upon some pretence for the justification of France, and the censure of the Cabinet.

The Nation may learn to estimate the extravagance of the basis, by a plain narrative of a few of the necessary consequences of its being admitted.

\* Mr. Erskine may now find a clue which will enable him to understand Mr. Pitt's speech. The Minister attacked the declaration of the Executive Directory, that they would listen to no proposals which were contrary to their Constitution and their Laws, and their Treaties, not as an ill-founded reason for resisting the cession of Belgium, but merely as an injurious principle which France insisted that we should admit, previous to any Negotiation, and without which they positively refused to negotiate at all. When Mr. Pitt, therefore, shewed that the principle was unjust and ill-founded, he proved that this Country ought not to agree to it; and as France positively declared, that she would not treat unless we did acknowledge it, he made it evident, that nothing remained for this Country but to continue the War. I could have wished that Mr. Erskine, for his own sake, had spared his aspersions, when it rested upon such grounds, "that he could not help being struck, in the moment, with the force of that characteristic infirmity, which seems to impel him, as it were by a law of his nature, always to act on one principle under the pretext of another." Such flippancy but ill becomes a learned Gentleman of rank and character. He would have been taught its impropriety, if he had ventured to make the observation in his place in the House of Commons.

We

We should engage thereby to surrender all our Conquests in the East and West Indies, without insisting upon any compensation whatever ; because the French Constitution has declared, that all the dominions of their ancient Monarchy constitute an unalienable part of the Republic, one and indivisible. Upon the same principle, we must acquiesce in their possession of the Netherlands, of Savoy, Avignon, and all Germany to the Rhine. We must assent likewise to their retention of Maestricht and Venloo, which secure the absolute dominion of Holland, because they are made part of the Republic by her Laws. With respect to those Treaties which she is pleased to consider as binding upon her, we should engage to guarantee every thing for which France has stipulated, although it should militate ever so much against our own interests, and this without the slightest previous knowledge of what these articles were. If, according to common report, the Treaty between Prussia and the Republic has contracted for the secularization of the Ecclesiastical Electorates, for the overthrow of the Germanic Constitution, and the aggrandizement of Prussia, to the ruin of our faithful Ally the Emperor, we must submit, because we are pledged not to contradict, by our proposals, those Treaties which bind the Republic. Should any secret article in the Treaty between Spain and France provide, that we are to cede Gibraltar or Jamaica to the former, as a price of that War which she has

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declared

declared against us, our compliance is contained in the very basis upon which we have agreed to negotiate. Should it be a condition in any of her Treaties, that the Contracting Parties shall exclude from their ports every vessel from England, we bind ourselves to seal, with our own hands, the ruin of our Commerce. Or should they reciprocally stipulate that the Belligerent Parties will not lay down their arms till every ship taken by Great Britain during the War shall be restored, we give an unqualified consent to weaken our own Navy, and to recruit the Fleets of our Enemies. In short, however absurd, disadvantageous, or disgraceful the conditions, although they should go to the utter ruin of Europe and of ourselves, as many of them would do, we are bound to admit them without discussion, compensation, or murmuring, provided they are enjoined by the Constitution, the Laws, or the Treaties which bind the French Republic \*.

But

\* This conduct, on the part of the Executive Directory, runs very parallel with that of the Allies in the War with France at the commencement of this Century.

The Marquis de Torcy was sent by the Most Christian King to the Hague, in the year 1709, and made very advantageous offers to the Allies, in his Master's name. Our Ministers, as well as those of the States General, thought fit to refuse them, and advanced other proposals in their stead; but of such a nature as no Prince could digest, who did not lie at the immediate mercy of his Enemies. M. de Torcy, after discussing the matter

BUT Mr. Erskine says \*, that we are at War for Belgium; "since supposing all other obstacles could be removed, this territory, upon the footing of the late Negotiation, remains an insuperable bar to Peace."

This argument concludes nothing. The Restitution of the Netherlands was not absolutely in-

with them, assisted the British and Dutch Plenipotentiaries, at their own desire, in the style and expression, when they were drawing up their demands. He put them in the strongest language which he could find; and then insisted to know their last resolution, whether these were the lowest terms the Allies would accept. Having received a determinate answer in the affirmative, he spoke to this effect:

"That he thanked them heartily for giving him the happiest day he had ever seen in his life. That, in perfect obedience to his Master, he had made concessions, in his own opinion, highly derogatory to the King's honour and interest. That he had not concealed the *difficulties* of his Court, or the *discontents* of his Country, by a long and unsuccessful War, which could only justify the large offers he had been empowered to make. That the Conditions of Peace now delivered into his hands, by the Allies, would raise a new spirit in the Nation, and remove the greatest difficulty the Court lay under, by putting it in his Master's power to convince all his subjects how earnestly his Majesty desired to save them from the burden of the War; but that his Enemies would not accept of any terms which could consist EITHER WITH THEIR SAFETY OR HIS HONOUR." Such sentiments inspired all France with courage to contend against and surmount those dangers that encompassed her. But France had no Opposition who would justify her Enemies to the People.

sisted upon ; for we offered at least to discuss the point. But the Directory spurned at the proposal ; and proffered a basis of Negotiation which was absolutely inadmissible. Although we had acceded to the avulsion of Belgium from the Emperor, hostilities must continue, since France has laid impediments in the way of Peace, even more insurmountable ; and these she must remove before the Netherlands can become an object of Treaty.

There are people who admit, that the Executive Directory was determined not to accept of any terms short of an unconditional submission on the part of Great Britain, and yet who blame the Cabinet for not having originally proposed the Cession of Belgium to France, in order to manifest to the People of that Country our wishes for Peace, and the extravagant pretensions of its Rulers. When they desire us to make such an important sacrifice of our own interests and those of our Ally, they ought at least to shew how it was practicable to accomplish the object which they propose. They ought to prove farther, what it is impossible to prove, that the despotic Government of that Country, supported by the Military, would have been influenced by such sentiments of the People, if we could have excited them. But I shall not agitate the point ; because it assumes what I never can concede, that this Country ought to acquiesce in the Contolidation of the Netherlands with the French Republic.



This event, should it ever occur, will strike a vital blow to our prosperity. It is for our interest, as well as for our honour, to support the Emperor with our utmost resources, while he is willing to attempt the recovery of Belgium. A country so fertile, so cultivated, so abounding in inhabitants, who are remarkable for industrious and simple manners, would add greatly to the Power of France, wherever it was placed. But situated as it is, opposite to and out-flanking our coasts, it gives that strength to our Rival, which is peculiarly dangerous to us. The existence of Holland as an independent State was secured by her having France and Austria as her neighbours, whose mutual interest it was to prevent her from falling into the hands of the other. But the removal of Austria will leave that country a defenceless prey to the Republic. Indeed by the possession of Maestricht and Venloo France has anticipated this consequence, and already secured its subjection. The whole territory which passed to Maximilian from the House of Burgundy, that rich country which was the nursing mother of manufactures in Europe, will be thus occupied by an enterprising Power, who has capacity to restore it to its pristine consequence at our expence. The maritime resources of the Netherlands, and the undivided market of Germany, will add incalculably to that strength whose exorbitance is already dangerous and alarming. Possessed of harbours infinitely superior to those which we have on

the contiguous side of our island, she may issue forth to destroy our trade, and invade those kingdoms at her pleasure. But what is still more important, she will shut us completely out from all connection with the Continent. Partly by her controlling power, and partly by her intrigues, she may close many of those markets against us, which are kept open at present, through a wish to retain our alliance. We shall thus lose all means of dividing the strength of France in case of War, by engaging the co-operation of other States, who are jealous of her ambition and her power. These and many other reasons have operated with all the great statesmen who have directed our Councils for centuries, to interfere with our whole force, that they might prevent the annexation of the Netherlands to France. The unremitting ardor with which France has, in every period of her history, laboured to acquire them, is the most decisive proof of their value to her.

When it is once established that it is of importance to her to retain them, it becomes an object of the first consequence to this Country to prevent it. These reasons, and this invariable practice of our wisest and best Ministers, will make it something more than madness if we should ever consent to surrender these provinces, while we can command a guinea or a soldier to struggle against it. But Mr. Erskine comes forward to oppose the maxims of our Ancestors, avowing that he is unacquainted with the importance of the Netherlands to Great Britain \*.

How any gentleman can undertake to advise, where he is ignorant of the main point in the case, it is for himself to determine. Happily for the Empire, it is in the People's power to slight his councils. He conceives that it is useless to consider the danger of suffering Belgium to remain a part of France, because we may gain an object of much greater importance by surrendering it. His words are \*,—" But to speak plainly and boldly my opinion with regard to Peace is this—That when the relative situations of the two Countries are considered, the cession of Belgium to the Emperor, the arrangement concerning St. Domingo, or any other specific line of Negotiation, are as dust in the balance, when compared with THE SPIRIT AND TEMPER of the Peace which hereafter shall be made."

" Supposing, by our great resources and by the chances of War, we could drive the Government of France to recede from her present pretensions, *not* upon the approach of a new æra of security, confidence, and friendship, but to avoid a political explosion, by the destruction of her credit; consider coolly what sort of Peace this would be—where the hostile mind remained;—consider how easily France might again embroil us, to the hazard of our finances and

“ of our Constitution, which leans absolutely upon  
 “ public credit for support.”

He concludes with asserting in the same spirit\*, that if “ *we* (*i. e.* England and France) were truly  
 “ friends upon liberal principles, War must for a  
 “ century be banished from the earth.”

How would our Ancestors, who, whether Whigs or Tories, were all Englishmen, and as such jealous of the national honour and prosperity, have endured to hear the surrender of Dunkirk, not to talk of all Flanders and Holland, defended upon principles like these? If we are to concede every thing to France which she may desire, as a sacrifice to her friendship, the argument will extend to the surrender of Portsmouth and Plymouth, or the Kingdom of Ireland. But if we are to inquire into the value previous to the concession, Mr. Erskine should not have advised the cession of Belgium until he had ascertained its importance. God forbid that this Country should be reduced to such a contemptible state of imbecillity, that we are to part with every muniment against the aggressions of France, through idle hopes of her friendship, or unmanly terror at her enmity. Of what value is our wealth or our Constitution, if they are held upon the precarious conditions of forbearance on

the part of the Regicide, or of the proudest Conqueror who can display his banners to the remotest extremity of the earth? Our dearest treasures are converted into sources of our misery, if we are tortured with the dread of losing what we have neither courage to defend nor powers to enjoy.

It is sentiments like these which have ruined all Nations who have sunk under the victor's sword.—They enervate that noble spirit which swells with enthusiasm and joy in a perilous enterprise for a noble cause.—They anticipate the consequences of subjugation, and reconcile us to slavery before the manacles are prepared. If we are to submit to a second conquest, let us submit without disguising our baseness from ourselves. After the first pillage, France may incline to spare her subjects, and treat us as she would the inhabitants of Picardy or Brabant.—But if we are the Sons of Freedom, and are willing to fight for our inheritance, let us recollect how the Poet describes and apparels the Goddess :

When Freedom, drest in blood-stain'd vest,  
 To every Knight her war-song sung,  
 Upon her head wild weeds were spread,  
 A gory anlace by her hung :  
 She daunced on the heath,  
 She heard the voice of Death ;  
 Pale-eyed Affright, his heart of silver hue,  
 In vain assailed her bosom to aquail,

To talk of Countries like France and England being kept in Peace by mutual affection, is to feed our apprehension with green and girlish trash, unwholesome and distasteful to a manly mind. There is no principle of League between Nations, but that of mutual interest ; there is no means of preventing aggression, but shewing that we are enabled to repel and avenge it. Self-interest is the uniform director of the politics of every Government. It operates more powerfully in the Councils of a Nation than in those of private men. The latter are restrained by that curb of opinion, which man in society imposes upon his neighbours and himself ; but States consider themselves as placed beyond such controul. So uniform is their practice, that a very different and much more loose system of Ethics is admitted to influence their conduct, without reproach, than would be tolerated in common life. When uniform experience has thus taught us what man is, and what his conduct will be ; we must act upon these conclusions, however they may contradict our wishes and our fancies. These principles apply to every Nation, every Country, and every Climate. But, as between France and Great Britain, they are considered as fundamental axioms, by which their conduct towards each other has been uniformly regulated. I will quote an authority on the point to Mr. Erskine, which may have greater weight with him than either the principles of Human Nature or the example of Centuries.—It is the speech of Mr. Fox, delivered in  
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the debate upon the Commercial Treaty in 1787. At that time his mind retained the characteristics of an English Statesman. He delivered it as his opinion, that the only situation in which Great Britain could stand in Europe, with honour, dignity, or safety, was as a counterpoise to France. He shewed that this was the uniform practice of the Country in the most flourishing periods of her history. He scouted the idea of perpetual amity with that Nation; and proved that she was our natural and necessary Enemy, from situation. Contrast- ed in their interests, and co-equal in their power, the Countries must ever feel all that can keep them rivals, and place them in perpetual opposition to each other. The argument of Mr. Fox was applicable to that Power under every change in its Constitution. He has demonstrated that our mutual animosity did not arise from temporary circumstances, or the antipathy of one Government to the other; but that the French Nation was actuated by a regular, fixed, and systematic enmity to this Country, and that when she opened her arms to us with professions of friendship, it was through an insidious wish to complete our destruction\*.

These were the sentiments of a fine understanding, formed upon a thorough knowledge of the

\* Debates, February 12, 1787.

dispositions of our Rival, joined to an intimate acquaintance with the interest and the situation of the two Countries. Is Mr. Erskine doomed to follow Mr. Fox only when he is wrong, and to desert him when he happens to be right? If he is to think for himself upon questions of policy, he must be content to read, to investigate, and digest. He has in truth much to learn, and the labour will be severe; but the first fruits of such culture will amply repay him. He will despise such petty, truckling, unprofitable sentiments as he now advances, sentiments which it would be ruinous for the Nation to follow, and which are unworthy of their Author to propose.

Having examined all the material positions of Mr. Erskine's book, I might here conclude,—but circumstances have arisen since I began to write which call for our particular attention. New overtures have been recently made by the Executive Directory to treat separately with the Emperor. Informed of this circumstance by our faithful Ally, Ministers have dispatched Mr. Hammond to Vienna to negotiate a general Peace in concert with him. This step will at least evince to the Country that Administration are earnest in their wishes to put a period to the calamities of War. If, unhappily, it should fail of success, it leaves us no other resource but the vigour of our arms.

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Although I would not anticipate such an event, yet it is right that we should be prepared to meet it. If the implacable malice of the Directory will not grant us Peace upon honourable conditions, we must resolve to face our Enemies with that manly mind which is suited to our ancient character.

We have to contemplate what the conduct of the Emperor may be, and what conduct it becomes us at all events to pursue.

It has been said by one Gentleman, that if Peace cannot be made in conjunction with the Emperor, we ought to conclude it alone, rather than continue the War. I will indulge the hope that there is no other man in this kingdom capable of suggesting the advice, or delivering the opinion. It would at once destroy that confidence in English honour and fidelity which has been so nobly supported by this Country in all her intercourse with foreign Powers. How could we again raise our heads in Europe, after the sacrifice of a faithful Ally, who is ambitious of Peace and moderate in his terms, to an inglorious attention to our immediate convenience? Are we to leave no distinction between the conduct of Great Britain and that of a Continental Monarch, whose treachery is the prime source of our calamities, and the subject of universal execration. No man has more vehemently  
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condemned such perfidy than the Right Honourable Gentleman who has suffered this opinion to escape him.—No man has been more ready to prophesy the inevitable result of such crooked policy.

But his council was not less foolish than degrading. We are at all times bound to interfere for the protection of Austria, against the superior power of France. We do so from a sense of our own safety; since, if that Empire were destroyed, France might over-run Europe at her pleasure. To have followed such advice, therefore, during any period of the War, would have been to pursue a policy ruinous and unnatural to our own interests. But when we consider the time when this exhortation to the breach of a solemn treaty was delivered, it renders it not less wicked than impolitic. The question is not now, whether we shall abandon Austria to her fate, and conclude a Peace separate from her, but whether she shall do so by us? France is exerting every nerve to detach her from our Alliance, and she could devise no means so effectual as to inculcate the notion that we desire to abandon her. If the Emperor should ever suspect our faith, both interest and revenge will drive him to conclude a separate Treaty with the Republic, and leave this Country to contend alone against her. Yet it is at this season, when the constancy of our Ally is assailed by misfortune, and he is tempted

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to defection by alluring offers from the Victor, that the Leader of a British Opposition proclaims to a British House of Commons the expediency of a separate Peace with France.

This Country is composed, I trust, of nobler metal, and will never abandon the Emperor while he is willing to continue the War, for the common object of a safe and honourable Peace. I do not fear this stain upon our national honour. The more immediate danger is, lest, broken down by disasters, Austria should be compelled to submit to whatever terms the Republic may choose to impose. France looks to Peace with that Power, that she may turn her whole force to the conquest and the pillage of this Country. It is for this reason that we must exert our most strenuous efforts to prevent it. I certainly retain considerable confidence, that not even the successes of Buonaparte can detach the Emperor from our Alliance. Pressed as he is on every side, the fortunes of the House of Austria are not so low as they were when Maria Theresa was obliged to fly from Vienna, with her infant son in her arms, and to throw herself upon the generous Nobles of Hungary for succour. Her illustrious descendant is worthy of the blood from whence he sprung. This gallant Prince is animated with that just and honourable spirit, which is the loveliest grace of Monarchs. His subjects have manifested a noble ardor and an unshaken loyalty worthy of such a Sovereign. No defeat has re-

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pressed, no calamity has daunted it. Let us hail the generous spirit while it is still dwelling upon the earth. It is the best blessing of a People.—It is their consolation in misfortune, their antidote against disgrace, their firm bulwark against oppression, and will prove the sure pledge of ultimate success. If, undismayed by the calamities of a War which desolates the very heart of their Country, the Emperor and his People refuse to conclude a separate and disgraceful Peace, does it become Great Britain to shew less courage, less honour, less constancy, less disregard of present comfort, or less zeal for her independence, than the Countries which are washed by the Danube or the Mulda? —If the Emperor disdains to break his Alliance with us, although the French demand it in thunder at the gates of his Capital, what are we called upon to do, who are relieved from a similar calamity by his exertions?—Would it be wise, would it be honourable in us to refuse him that assistance which can alone enable him to resist with success our mutual Enemy?

Much and very groundless clamour has been raised against those Loans which we have already sent him. If these sums were necessary to put the Power of Austria in motion, in what other way could we have employed them to the same advantage? If to annoy the Enemy is our object, surely there are no other means by which we could

create an equal force at such a small expence To the assistance of Austria we have hitherto stood much indebted. It has withdrawn the attention of the Republic from her Marine, and protected this Country from a menaced invasion. I am well aware that the Nation, rising in its strength, would tear any number of invaders limb from limb, and scatter them the sport of adverse winds upon our shores. But still their continuance upon our coasts, though but for a single day, would do us much mischief. The Funds would sink in value. Works of industry would no longer proceed; and the tranquil occupations of life must cease, with a loss infinitely greater to the Country, than the total amount of her remittances to Vienna. This question, therefore, is reducible into a very narrow compass.—Our Alliance with the Emperor is the only means by which we can hope to attain the chief object of the War. A Loan is necessary, both to secure and render it effectual. Is there any man, therefore, who can conscientiously advise us to forego a measure so essential to our success, and even to our defence?

There is still a third situation in which we may be placed, and which we ought to be prepared to meet. The Emperor may be fatally driven to a separate Peace, and this Country may be compelled to continue hostilities alone. We should, in that event, be encompassed with numerous and  
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fore dangers. But although a situation of peril, it would leave no room for dismay, much less for despair. We have sufficient force to overcome the efforts of all our Enemies, if our spirit should only prove equal to our strength.

The Balance of Europe would be destroyed by this event, beyond our single power to restore. But as some counterpoise to the overgrown dominions of France, we must retain all those valuable conquests we have hitherto made. I have not yet heard it whispered, that we ought to relinquish these territories to our Enemies without an equivalent. I do not know of what stuff the heart and mind could be made, which should dare to propose such ignominy. These possessions were gained by the valour of a British Navy, and of British Troops; and the hand which acquired, is able to defend them. If the Republic, determined to attempt our utter destruction, refuses to comprehend us in the supposed Treaty of Peace, the struggle will be no common one; it will be between the single but the utmost strength of France and Great Britain. Although we should stand thus opposed, yet the comparison of our respective resources ought to inspire this Country with confidence of success.

Those who have passed lately through the territories of the Republic can speak to the extent of her sufferings. Her population decreased, her marine annihilated, her commerce and manufac-

tures ruined, and the industrious spirit of her people destroyed. The preternatural force of Requisition, which enabled that Country to overwhelm Europe, is now passed away. The Executive Government can no longer seize property at pleasure, or force the People in droves to slaughter. To the ruin of her own finances, the Addreeses of the Directory, and the resolutions of her Legislature do most conclusively speak. She has expended the wealth of France, of the Netherlands, of Holland, and the plunder of Germany, on the War. All that remains from the lavish waste of this universal robbery is the wealth of Italy. It supports her in this last great impending effort, which, if we are able to resist, the conditions of Peace will remain in our hands.

This is no fancied picture of the situation of France. The difficulty which she has found to recruit and re-organize her armies on the Rhine after the defeats of the last campaign, paints the fact with the pencil of truth. If other testimony were wanting, the expressions of her own Minister record it to the most ample effect\*. That wild

\* M. Delacroix, in his conference with Lord Malmesbury, gives his opinion of the situation of France in the following words : “ Dans le tems Revolutionnaire tout ce que vous dites, “ my Lord, etoit vrai--rien n’egaloit notre puissance ; mais ce “ tems n’existe plus. Nous ne pouvons plus lever la Nation en “ Masse pour voler au secours de la Patrie en danger. Nous “ ne pouvons plus engager nos Citoyens d’ouvrir leurs Bourse “ pour les verser dans le Tresor National, et de se priver “ meme du necessaire pour le bien de la chose publique.”——  
Official Papers, page 55.

spirit

spirit of enthusiasm which enabled the French to endure whatever their Rulers inflicted, and to execute whatever they prescribed, has at length subsided. Exhausted with War, strained with exertion, and worn down by the most sanguinary civil discord, they remain inert and breathless in the hands of their Government. Neither a Revolution nor a Republic have charms any longer for the ears of France. They serve only as melancholy catch-words to bring back to their memory all they have undergone, of murder, of rapine, of confusion, of terror, of having suffered every thing, and having gained nothing. It is a fact so notorious, that we hear it from the captives in our prisons, that the body of the people both detest and despise that new Constitution which is called “ a free “ Representative Republic,” by the Opposition of England alone. They wish for the Restoration of Monarchy ; but taught by the unexampled calamities of past changes, they would rather endure the vilest Government, than risk an alteration upon the hazard of a new Revolution.

When contrasted with such a Nation, what has this Country to fear. Let her view her true situation, not with the jaundiced eye of Opposition, but with the impartial and anxious regard of one whose interest it is to investigate the truth. Her soil is not wet and reeking with the blood of her best inhabitants, spilled by the perjured judgments



of Revolutionary Tribunals. The property of her Merchants is not confiscated to State purposes. Her people are not compelled to take up arms, and led handcuffed to the field, under the insulting appellation of Volunteers. . We have an unbroken military strength, and a victorious Navy. We have a Constitution worthy of preservation; and, thank Heaven, we possess the means to preserve it. Survey the general face of the Country, and then determine whether our Wealth, our Commerce, or our Industry are decayed. The National Credit continues unshaken, notwithstanding the declarations of Mr. Fox\*. Our Public Debt is in a train of speedy liquidation†, in derision of the prophecies of Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Erskine. Many and great burthens have undoubtedly been imposed upon the People; but they have principally fallen upon the rich. The season of hostility, however, is not one of profit or national advantage. It necessarily brings many calamities upon the People; and they will fall with partial

\* See the subject of the Bank's refusal to pay in specie considered at length in the Appendix.

See the Report of the Secret Committee appointed to examine the state of our finances. It abounds with statements which, I trust, dissipate any alarm in the Country as to the consequences of continuing the War. Among other consoling truths, it is proved that the National debt will be discharged, by the funds already appropriated to the purpose, in 33 years, according to the most favourable calculation; and in 54 years, according to that which is least so.

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heaviness on particular classes of society. These events are to be deplored. They arise from the imperfections of our nature, and no community can ever shake them off; but are they on that account the less to be endured? When two mighty Nations make their dreadful appeal to the Arbiter of battles, it is not to be managed as a contest of mockery and sport. It is beyond human discretion either to limit its extent or to foresee all its consequences. If our antagonist will pour forth the whole wealth and population of his dominions to overwhelm us, we must summon up an equal force to resist. In such a conflict, we shall have much to suffer, but it will be nobly suffered to a wise purpose. Even such miseries are pleasure and prosperity, when weighed against the fatal effects of unconditional submission and an abject Peace.

If we could but credit the Opposition, we have a panacea for all these calamities in a new Administration. Every thing must go on prosperously if they are suffered to negotiate a Peace. Mr. Pitt is personally obnoxious to the French.—They suspect his sincerity, and would grant more favourable terms to his Rival.

It is a curious censure upon a Minister, that he is hated by our Enemies. It is a new principle in politics, that the terms of a Treaty are concessions of favour, instead of alternate stipulations, exacted

by necessity. How can the Directory suspect the Minister of insincerity, when it is they who have provoked the War, and who have repelled every advance towards Peace? Patiently reviewing the whole conduct of this Opposition since the commencement of hostilities, is there one prudent man who can allow that they are fitted to conclude a Peace? In every single instance in which the interests of this Country and those of France have been opposed, they have joined with the Republic. They have disparaged our cause, depreciated our condition, and argued for our Enemy. The Declarations and Manifestoes of France have furnished those arguments and topics which an English Opposition have illustrated and enforced. Not contented with borrowing such justifications for the Republic as she has vouchsafed to put forth, they have invented others where they could find nothing accommodated to English feelings.

The mischief of such conduct is infinite. It gives a false weight and colour to the arguments, and insinuations, and accusations of the Directory against this Country. It inspires the People of France with confidence in their Government, when they perceive that their Executive employ such just and cogent arguments as excite assent from an English Party. It not only gives strength to our Enemies, and enables them to persevere, but it dispirits the People of this Country. Much  
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and deservedly as the French Legislature, under all its forms, challenges reprobation, it has fallen into no such antipatriotic guilt. Intemperate, and furious, and sanguinary, and unrelenting as their Parties have been, we can meet with no factions who have declared for the Enemies of the Republic.—Their debates were filled with no encomiums upon England; with no despondent Addresses; with no depreciation of the national energy and resources; with no violent censure of those measures of the Executive Government which respected the prosecution of hostilities.—Divided in every thing else, they were unanimous in their efforts to aggrandize the Country, and to render the War successful.

But conduct, which was disdained amidst all their animosities, by Jacobins, and Maratists, and Regicides, was reserved to decorate an English Opposition, during the prosecution of a just and necessary but unsuccessful War. It is a Party in England who have discussed the conditions of Peace, as if they had been delegated from the French Republic to prepare us for the yoke. They have calumniated our sincerity,—they have depreciated our offers,—they have beaten down our demands,—they have justified the most extravagant pretensions of the Republic. What is there which could become a British Statesman that they have not omitted?—What is there which could be required from a Subject of France which they have not performed?

Well may the Executive Directory look forwards to that change of Administration which they boast that they will exact from our national impatience. Neither Reubell, nor Carnot, nor Le Reveillere Lepeaux, nor the insidious Syeyes, could demand more advantageous terms for France than our Opposition has spontaneously approved.

Upon what principles could such men come to negotiate, excepting upon those of unconditional submission? Shall we be mad enough to choose for the Guardians and Judges of our interests persons who have already decided against us? Their opinion respecting the deplorable situation of this Country has been long declared. They represent us in the gulph of Bankruptcy, of Ruin, and Revolution. They have argued that neither Belgium, nor St. Domingo, nor any other of our pretensions, should impede a Peace. These opinions are not anxiously concealed from the knowledge of our Enemies. They are avowed,—proclaimed,—palpable,—notorious. They are as evident to France as to Great Britain, and cited in the public newspapers of that Country, as a justification for the expulsion of our Ambassador, and as reasons for the refusal of our proposals. With what success could such men resist any thing which it might please the Directory to demand? Could they even counterfeit a shew of resistance to her most exorbitant pretensions?

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It is not such men and such councils that can restore this Empire and Europe to its ancient position. France never has yielded, and never will yield, the most trifling point which she believes that this Country will surrender rather than continue the War. If Peace is to be procured at all, it is to be procured by men who shew that they do not despair of the Country. Mr. Hammond's Mission will teach us much. No one after it can even mutter that Ministers are insincere. The situation of the Emperor makes him anxious to negotiate, and we can have neither wish nor object in a continuance of the War without him. If this Negotiation should unhappily fail, let us not disgrace ourselves and dispirit our Allies by new supplications. Peace must be ultimately within our reach; but it is to be fought by noble fortitude, by manly perseverance, by a choice of death before an ignominious escape from the contest.

Peace loves and dwells with the brave.—We cannot win her by petitions, and humiliations, and genuflexions; we must woo her in the firm voice of a great People, who prefer eternal War to a compromise of our safety and honour with either wealth or fear. Ours is not a contest for an idle name. The interest of a Nation can never be separated from the preservation of its honour.—

When that is lost, the peasant will feel misfortune following his ploughshare, and the manufacturer will deplore the calamity upon his loom. It is

the first truth of history, that every Nation who has loved Peace too well, has been vanquished and undone by the soft attachment. When the Goddess of Wisdom shouts to War, the People who do not kindle at the sound are abandoned by Gods and men. Let England never forget that she who presides over the spear is the Patroness of Industry and the Protectress of the Arts.

Those Petitions and Addresses for Peace into which Opposition would advertise us, can only spread discontent at home, and supply our Enemy with courage and perseverance. This clamorous impatience will increase the insolence of French demands; and, like flies caught in the spiders' meshes, we shall entangle ourselves more deeply by our struggles to get free.

Of this we may rest assured; that at whatever period the present contest may terminate, its advantages will rest with that People who have spirit to persevere. The Nation which first withdraws its confidence from the Executive Power, through a rash ardor to terminate hostilities, will leave it to her Rival to dictate the conditions of Peace. The Rulers of France already build upon the impatience of Great Britain. Their addresses, their papers, their debates, rest upon it as the main reason for continuing the War; they hold it forth to the French that perseverance will insure our acquiescence in whatever conditions they shall choose to prescribe.

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But I trust that some portion of the Roman mind still dwells within the Country. It is my fondest hope, that, in the noble spirit of our forefathers, we can bear any thing but discomfiture and disgrace; that we still look to what is becoming our rank, our power, and our past glory. Our interests, as an industrious, a manufacturing, and a commercial Nation, never were, and never can be, separated from them. They have risen with our military prowess, and they will perish with it. The War was commenced with the concurrence of the People. Do they wish to conclude it degraded and beaten in the eyes of Europe, without one of their injuries redressed? Terms were proposed to the French Government, which they have not dared to disclose to the French Nation\*. They have not done so, lest, satisfied of their moderation, this Revolutionary People should have risen in a mass to compel the Directory to accept them. Is it possible that the People of England wish to sue for Peace

\* This circumstance is not a little worthy of public notice. While the Directory conceived that their conduct in the Negotiation could not irritate the French Nation, they anxiously published all the proceedings. But when we had given in our proposals, they put a stop to the publication, and neither disclosed them, nor stated the substance of the Conference between Lord Malmesbury and M. Delacroix. After dismissing our Ambassador, they published in the *Redacteur*, (a Government newspaper similar to our *Gazette*,) a false statement of Conditions so exorbitant on our part, that we could scarcely have ventured to propose them at the gates of Paris.

upon



upon worse terms than the people of France would have been willing to accept? We are again making an attempt to procure it upon honourable terms. If War should be inevitable, let us prepare to sustain it as we ought.

The Power of France is not sufficiently great to terrify us; but it is so formidable that it ought to unite us. Let us not weaken our strength by distracted Councils, and by divided wishes. To prevent this, I have ventured to raise my feeble voice. I call upon the Country to act and think as if influenced by one common interest, and inspired with one soul. I adjure them in the name of God and Nature; in the name of every tie which binds man to social intercourse; in the name of every generous feeling which ennobles, and of every tender emotion which gladdens life, to sustain their own course and that of Europe, as the world demands it of them.—Whatever animosities may divide us; whatever misfortunes may depress us; whatever private calamities may assail us, let us consider that it is the happiness and the honour of England which we must defend. It is not a petty territory nor paltry distinction for which we are called upon to shed our blood; it is in a cause for which our ancestors have been prodigal of life. It is for our Laws, our Religion, and our Families; for all that is connected with public good, and with private happiness. Let us not

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“lay the flattering unction to our souls,” that **Peace** is to be attained by moderation, concession, or by the immense sacrifice of Belgium. Experiment has followed upon experiment. Nothing can purchase Peace for Britain but Victory, or the utter prostitution of all that she holds in estimation. I call that God to witness who judges me as I write, and who is the Arbiter of my life, that what I have said is the result of conviction; that it springs from the bottom of my heart.



# A P P E N D I X.

## REMARKS *on the supposed Scarcity of SPECIE.*

**N**O circumstance has occurred during the War which seems to have influenced the public opinion so strongly as the situation of the Bank, which made the interference of the Executive Government necessary upon a late occasion. Mr. Fox has thought proper to represent it as the Euthanasia of National Credit; but when its causes are thoroughly examined, it will be found that the capital of the Country never was greater, or the solvency of the Bank more indisputable than it then was; that the pressure did not arise from any of those measures to which Opposition impute it, but from the idle panic of some individuals, and the mercenary traffic of others. It will also be evident that the measure by which it was counteracted was wise and salutary; and that the conduct of those individuals who had caused it, if it had not thus been put a stop to, would have proved eventually pernicious to themselves, and hurtful to the interests of the Country.

Every one who attends to the situation of things in this Country, knows that a great part of its capital is put in motion by Paper Currency. If the people shall all at once reject this Paper, and insist to have Gold and Silver for it, it is obvious there must be great temporary embarrassment. The Banks who issue it, keep by them only such a quantity of Gold and Silver as is necessary to answer the usual purposes of their trade carried on in its ordinary and accustomed manner. They are therefore *not* in a situation *immediately* to answer the *extraordinary* demand which is made upon them. The Gold and Silver, the use of which  
has

has been supplied by the Paper Currency, has found its way abroad ; for not being wanted, it was impossible to keep it at home. The Banks, therefore, must have time to bring it back. This they will very soon be enabled to do by means of their capital ; for Gold and Silver, like all other commodities, are to be purchased. Like them, too, they find their way to the place where there is the greatest demand for them. From their nature and bulk, they are more easily transported from place to place than any other commodity, and are therefore more speedily procured to supply a temporary demand.

All this is very obvious to a reflecting mind, and it is of the utmost importance that this subject should be fully understood ; I therefore refer the intelligent reader to Dr. Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, vol. ii. pp. 17. 149. 151. and 330. where he will find these positions amply illustrated and proved beyond the possibility of contradiction.

This reasoning is farther confirmed by the fact, which always does happen, namely, that whenever there is a run upon the Country Banks the pressure falls upon the Bank of England. The Country Banks, by means of their capitals, are enabled to purchase Notes of the Bank of England. These are immediately poured in upon the Bank, in order to get Gold and Silver to answer the great and unusual demands which are made upon the Country Banks. But as the Country Banks are enabled, by means of their Capitals, to purchase Notes of the Bank of England immediately, because these Notes are in the Country, so if necessary the Bank of England will presently be enabled, by means of its Capital, to purchase Gold and Silver, which they are prevented from doing immediately, only because all the Gold and Silver wanted are not in the Country, and must be brought from a distance.

In the late crisis to which the alarms of weak individuals gave rise, the pressure as usual fell upon the Bank of England ; and in such a case the Bank had, in the ordinary course of things, only one of two alternatives to adopt—either it must have stopped payment all at once till a supply could be procured—or as the Public insisted upon departing from the accustomed manner

er in which they had conducted themselves, so the Bank must have had recourse to a new and extraordinary method of answering their demands. The former would be productive of so much mischief, that it ought not to be resorted to but from extreme necessity. The latter is only a alleviation of the evil. The one would put a total stop to the whole industry of the Country, and produce a shock from the highest to the lowest situations, the extent and effects of which are incalculable. The other would produce great inconvenience, but its effects might not go beyond a temporary hardship.

The latter expedient, however, is one to which the Bank of England has had recourse formerly. It has been obliged to pay in Sixpences; and it is obvious that if the Directors had resorted to this expedient upon a late occasion, they would have answered all the demands which could have come upon them, and have thus procured time till the panic, which produced the run, should have subsided, or if necessary till they had increased their store of Gold and Silver. By so doing, however, they would not have answered one hundredth part of the demands, which they are in use to do every day. Their clerks would necessarily take time to tell out the sum of every demand twice; the receiver must necessarily do the same. They are not bound to receive a new demand before they have satisfied a former one; and the time which this new mode must necessarily have taken, would have enabled them to answer only a very few demands in the course of a day.

But such a mode, though they were entitled to resort to it, would have produced infinite mischief to a Country whose manufactures are so multifarious, and whose commerce is so extended as that of Great Britain. The Executive Government stood forth boldly, nobly, and humanely, as the common friend of the Bank and of the Public. By enabling the Bank to resist the torrent of Paper which was poured in upon it, the good sense of the Country was roused, and opposed to the folly of the authors of the mischief. They saved the Country and relieved the Bank; and every good subject, who has a particle of intelligence, will applaud the measure as at once wise, salutary, and effectual.

The more sensible among us, freed from the panic which the conduct of certain individuals had occasioned, will attend more particularly to the nature of Paper Money, and satisfy themselves that so far as regards it, there was no ground of alarm. By means of Paper Money, the whole Gold and Silver, the place of which it supplies, is added to the fixed capital which it was formerly only the means of putting in motion.—It becomes a part of the *circulated* in place of the *circulating* Capital. It is in this way that Paper Money is beneficial:—it increases the fixed Capital of the Country, and by this means more of that Capital is put in motion. But it is the Capital put in motion which employs the labour and industry of the Country. The Capital put in motion also determines both the quantum of labour and industry of the Country, and likewise the amount of the circulating medium. The labour and industry of a Country may be less than the Capital of a Country is able to employ, but it never can be more; for there must be the means of rewarding labour and industry, otherwise labour and industry will not be exerted. In like manner, the quantity of circulating medium of a Country may be less than the amount of its Capital would require, but it never can be more; for as it is used only to put the fixed Capital in motion, the amount cannot go beyond the demand. It is impossible, therefore, for a Bank, or for any number of Banks, to circulate more Paper than the Capital of the Country requires to put that Capital in motion. If ever at any time they do put forth more Paper than the Capital of the Country requires, it must immediately return upon them. The intelligent reader will find these positions amply and aptly illustrated by Dr. Smith, in his 1st Vol. p. 441, et seq.

The late run upon the Bank, therefore, must have been occasioned either by too much Paper being put forth, which returned upon them, because it was not wanted; or it must have been occasioned by the unreasonableness of the people in insisting to have immediately that specie which the course of dealing and their own former conduct had made it impossible they should have.

That it was not occasioned by too much Paper is obvious from this circumstance, that more Paper is wanted than

than the Bank will put forth, as is evinced by the complaints that the Bank has narrowed, and will not enlarge its discounts.

If this is so, (and there can be no doubt that it is so,) then the only question is, Are the Banks equal to pay their debts?

Whether they are or are not must be matter of inquiry to every man, so far as relates to the particular Bank which issues Notes in his neighbourhood; but though I cannot ascertain the fact in regard to each particular Bank, I can state with confidence that Bankers in general are equal to their debts, and that this is obvious from the run which has been made upon the Bank of England: for this run, as already said, was occasioned by the Country Banks being obliged to purchase Notes of the Bank of England in order to provide Cash; and the very circumstance of the Country Banks being able to purchase these Notes, shews that they were equal to their debts. Then the question resolves into this, Is the Bank of England equal to its debts? If there could be room for doubt upon this point, it has been completely removed by the investigations in Parliament of the situation of the Bank. The result is before the Public, and it is unnecessary to state it here. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the fears of the People are subdued;—when they do, all measures in regard to this matter are needless.

The Opposition however, with a view to throw obloquy on the Minister, have ascribed the want of Gold and Silver to the remittances made to the Emperor.—This assertion produced a double mischief. It tended to raise a national clamour against these remittances, which I state boldly and distinctly were the most useful and least burdensome expenditures which this Country has sustained since the commencement of the War. It tended also to mislead the Public mind, and to make them believe, that their embarrassments were owing to a cause which had no existence in reality.

The former of these positions it is beyond my present purpose to establish at large;—that there was no founda-



tion for the latter will have already appeared evident to those who have attended to the first part of this Note. It however deserves a more particular consideration.

Before making the assertion the Opposition ought to have inquired, 1st, Whether there were at present less Gold and Silver in the Country than in common years; 2d, Whether the remittances made to the Emperor were entirely in Gold and Silver sent from this Country; or, Whether the Gold and Silver sent him was purchased abroad by means of commodities sent from home; or, Whether it was sent him from home purchased by commodities formerly sent abroad. They ought to have inquired, 3d, Whether Gold was not exported by individuals at the present moment, and whether the remittances made to the Emperor increased the total amount of bullion which would otherwise have been exported. If they had proceeded in this manner to ascertain the fact before they made the assertion, perhaps a regard to themselves would have restrained them from making it at all.

I have no means of ascertaining accurately the first fact, namely, Whether there is at present more or less Gold and Silver in the Country than heretofore; but, reasoning upon commercial principles, I have no hesitation in saying, that there is more now than there ever was at a former period.

According to the authority to whom I have referred in the passages alluded to, it is plain, that the quantity of Gold and Silver in a Country is always in proportion to the demand; and the demand is always in proportion to the quantity of Capital necessary to put the whole labour and industry of the Country in motion. In Great Britain therefore there is always more Gold and Silver than in any other Country, because her sum of labour and industry is out of all proportion beyond that of any other Country in Europe. And there is more Gold and Silver in Great Britain at present than at any former period: 1. Because her Commerce is greater than ever it was at any former period, and her labour and industry are in proportion to her commerce: 2. Because the amount of Paper  
Currency

Currency in Circulation is less than ever it was at any former period.

This last fact will be obvious from the following considerations :

Ever since the spring of 1793, the Bank of England have not discounted by a large proportion Bills of Exchange equal to the amount of what they were in use to do. This narrowing of their discounts has produced three consequences. 1. It has diminished, to a certain extent, the quantity of labour and industry which otherwise would have been put in motion. 2. It has obliged our Merchants to bring from abroad Gold and Silver to supply, as far as they could, the deficit which the want of discounts from the Bank occasioned. 3. From the activity and enterprising spirit of our people, it has occasioned a want of circulating medium and a consequent embarrassment : for our people have still exerted their labour and industry, and their exertions have been beyond the sum of *Money Capital* in actual circulation, which has been supplied to a certain extent by individual credit.

This embarrassment has been farther increased to a great degree by a measure which became necessary at the commencement of the present Session.

It will be remembered that five millions of Exchequer Bills were issued to relieve the temporary embarrassments of our Merchants 1793. Another million of Exchequer Bills was issued to relieve the distresses of the Merchants of Grenada. Navy and Exchequer Bills to an immense amount were also issued on account of the Public Service. The total amount of the Navy and Exchequer Bills in circulation at the commencement of the present Session was seven millions and upwards when they were very properly funded.

The measure of funding them was right in itself ; and with that I do not mean to quarrel ; but this measure produced consequences which bear immediately upon the point I have stated. These Navy and Exchequer Bills were a medium of circulation to their full amount *minus*

the discount ; and when it is considered that so large a sum of circulating medium was thus at once withdrawn, and this too at a time when there was a demand for its increase, the wonder is not that embarrassment has been felt,—but that this embarrassment has not been much greater.

That this circumstance has not produced even more embarrassment than has been actually felt can be accounted for only in two ways : 1. A part of the Capital which was kept up for speculations in the purchase of such Paper had found its way back to the usual channels of production of industry. 2. The deficiency has been partly supplied by the Gold and Silver which the export of our manufactures has enabled our Merchants to bring from abroad.

The clamour therefore which the Opposition have raised on account of Money sent to the Emperor is completely without foundation. Though every sum which has been sent him had been in Gold and Silver, it would quickly have returned (and where Gold and Silver were sent they quickly did return) into the coffers of our Merchants. But the prejudice against exporting Gold and Silver is one of antient date ; and though long ago exploded by every man of understanding, it is yet of deep root in vulgar apprehensions. In such a crisis every considerate man, who looked only to the well-being of the State, would have been anxious to allay the uneasiness of the Public mind. It had arisen not from one cause, but from many. It was necessary to proceed with caution, and to investigate with coolness ;—yet, without stooping to examination, the Opposition at once ascribed the situation of the Country to one single cause. Their clamour was bottomed in a popular prejudice. In such a case, there might have been hesitation in resorting to a popular prejudice, even though it had been well founded ; because it might increase the Public uneasiness, which it should be an honest man's first object to remove. But if the prejudice had been investigated it would have been found without foundation. Yet these men rashly resorted to a popular prejudice, and ascribed to a particular measure, consequences which could not result from it at all. How deplorable for the Country, and how degrading to the individuals

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dividuals concerned! Such are the dreadful effects of Party, that it blinds its votaries to every consideration, but the accomplishment of Party purposes. In the most critical situations of the State its real interests are forgotten, and its dignity and safety sacrificed to self-interested views.

The Leaders of Opposition cannot be ignorant that Gold is exported at present because its value is higher on the Continent than it is in Great Britain; and it will be impossible to prevent its exportation till the price shall rise higher in England than it is on the Continent, or till its value on the Continent shall fall. So long as a standard guinea is intrinsically worth more than one and twenty shillings, it cannot be otherwise than that the Gold Coin of these realms will be melted down. It is a serious evil when the market price of Gold rises above the mint price; but such is the cause at this moment, and is one cause of the late run upon the Bank. There subsists a permission to export Gold Bullion, but there is a prohibition against exporting Gold Coin. Guineas are therefore melted down into Bullion for the purpose of exportation. To prevent this inconvenience, Dr. Smith (vol. i. p. 67) recommends a small duty or seignorage upon the coinage of Gold and Silver. The expedient certainly promises to answer its purpose. Still, however, a measure of this kind deserves serious consideration before it is adopted; for in cases of this sort an alteration very often produces effects directly the reverse of those which were intended.

I will defend the Minister only in such measures as I believe to be right. In one thing I think him greatly to blame. He has never fairly met the public exigency, or required from the people such a sum as was necessary for the pressure he had to sustain. This conduct certainly has contributed to the embarrassment which has been felt. All payments have been in arrear; and to relieve the temporary pressure, Exchequer Bills to an immense amount have been issued. This expedient, which at first relieved, ultimately increased the mischief. Public Paper fell to an immense discount. The buying and selling of it became a trade; and though productive of great profit to the dealers, it was attended with great loss to the Public. Money was kept up by the Capitalists for speculations in these

these purchases, and the whole Capital, which was employed in this trade of unproductive industry, had been withdrawn or withheld from the channels of productive labour. Besides the loss in reproduction, the whole loss arising from discounts ultimately fell upon the Public; whose debts were thus increased, without any equivalent, by a sum equal to the amount not merely of the discount, but of the depression of the Public Funds in consequence.

The Public should, therefore, discriminate between Paper Currency which bears a discount, and that which does not. Wherever it bears a discount, it is hurtful; when it passes at its representative value, it is beneficial.

A plan to remedy the inconvenience which arose from this inability in the Bank to answer its demands in Specie has been suggested by the President of the Board of Agriculture. It is only conspicuous for its superficial simplicity, and its palpable inconsistency.

1. It confounds *Bank Paper* and *State Paper*, though the distinction between them is as great as that between good and evil. It certainly is impossible to controul the extent of the latter; but it is not only possible to limit the quantity of the former, but in fact it limits itself. It is determined, as I have already stated, by the quantity of Capital required to be put in motion. The sage Baronet has travelled to Sweden and America, and cast an eye upon France to prove the mischief of the unlimited issuing of Paper. The fact is true, and the observation is just, but it applies only to *State Paper*. He might have found a more apposite instance nearer home. In Scotland there is not a town, nay hardly a village, where there is not a Bank which issues Notes. In Edinburgh there are four Banks which issue Paper; in Glasgow the same number; in Paisley, Greenock, Stirling, Perth, Dundee, Montrose, Aberdeen, Leith, there are more than one of such Banks, yet no inconvenience is felt by this unlimited circulation of Paper. The instance justifies the reasoning that it is impossible for a Bank, or any number of Banks, to keep in circulation a greater quantity of Paper than the Capital of the Country requires. States can issue more,

more, but the mischief is seen and felt by that depreciation of their Paper which ensues.

2. This plan supposes that "the necessity of suspending the payment of Cash at the Bank, can only be attributed to its having too large a proportion of Paper in circulation, compared to the amount of its Specie." The supposition, as I have already shewn, is completely wrong. The necessity arises from the fact, that the people insist to have a larger proportion of Specie than they have been accustomed to receive, and which is not at all requisite for the common purposes to which it is applied. The necessity will cease to exist so soon as the panic leaves one set of the people, and so soon as the fall of the price of Gold and Silver removes the object of profit, which is the motive with those of another description.

Proceeding upon these two grand and fundamental mistakes, we could have little hope that the remedy would prove efficacious. But it is singular, that conceiving the mischief to arise from an *overflow of Paper*, he first proposes to take away five Millions of Bank Paper, and then to *supply the deficiency* by the issuing of *other Paper*; and this new Circulating Paper is to consist *either of State Paper or of Notes issued by licensed Bankers*. In my humble apprehension, State Paper ought to be issued in no case whatever; but if the practice must be continued, it should be issued in such manner as never to be at a lower discount than Bills of Exchange, which are the Paper of individuals; for the property of individuals ought not to be injured if possible, and their exertions ought not to be discomposed by the measures of the State. Whether it would be expedient for the State to license Bankers, or whether it would be advisable for individuals in London to institute Banks, not inconsistent with the privileges of the Bank, as they have been established by Parliament, involves considerations of great depth and magnitude; but as they are not necessary for the present discussion, I forbear to enter upon them here. It is sufficient for me at present to remark upon the inconsistency of that plan, which, supposing the mischief to arise from an overflow of Bank Notes, is to remedy the evil by a new deluge of Paper, which would withdraw from circulation Paper of

of a known and beneficial tendency, and . . . substitute in its place either Paper of a sort that is felt to be detrimental, or else of a kind the very same with that which is to be withdrawn, but the experiment in regard to the circulating capacity of which is yet to be tried.

The worthy Baronet calls to his assistance the situation of the Bank in the time of King William, and the plan devised for the restoration of public credit by the Earl of Halifax. The name of this great man is ever to be mentioned with reverence and respectful gratitude; but Sir John Sinclair mistakes the evil which then existed, and the effects of the remedy. The mischief was the profusion of Exchequer Tallies then in circulation, and the cure was effected not by the increased Capital of the Bank, but because the sum subscribed withdrew 800,000*l.* in Tallies from the circulation.

There are such a combination of circumstances in questions of this sort, that some of them elude the investigation of the most penetrating. It is therefore safer to desist from acting; than to be forward to act. In mercantile transactions things right themselves, and in this, as in other cases, the pressure will operate its own relief. Any interference is more apt to confound and disconcert, than to aid or promote individual exertion. The one is always uncertain in its effects; the other is sure, gradual, and fixed in its operation.

F I N I







